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AN ANTHOLOGY OF INDO-ANGLIAN VERSE

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE
TO EACH SET OF SELECTIONS

by

A. R. CHIDA

“.....You can destroy
The poet, if you like, but not his songs.”

—HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA

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INTRODUCTION

A PROPHET, it has been said of old, has no honour in his own country. Never were these words truer of application than to our own poets of Hyderabad—those poets who have taken to writing in English. We have, most of us, perhaps, heard of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Mr. Harindranath Chattopadhyaya and Nawab Sir Nizamat Jung Bahadur as poets and yet how many of us have read their poetical productions? They are better known in England than in the city where they reside. This is indeed a tragedy in the realm of literary appreciation.

I have found even among the very highly educated a complete ignorance of even the verses of so well-known a person as Mrs. Sarojini Naidu. And, as for Sir Nizamat Jung, except a few friends of his, but few have read his sonnets. The reason for this is, perhaps, that their productions have not been sufficiently advertised locally. Even this reason is not complete in itself. And to this I must, perhaps, couple the reason that, generally speaking, only a very few are interested in poetry and poetical productions, even Shakespeare being read merely for the purpose of getting through University examinations or for the purpose of staging a play to earn some sort of local fame. Neither Shakespeare nor Shelley nor any one of the poets, as a rule, is sought after for the purpose of deriving intellectual pleasure and mental edification.

I have prepared this short Anthology of English Verse produced by our local poets in order to place before the student world and the educated public specimens of their productions and by the mere novelty of the attempt arrest their attention and secure from them some study

and appreciation of the poetry as produced by these people. It must be remembered that at the present day no one outside of Hyderabad, except for Tagore, has written such verses of excellence as those produced by Harindranath, Sarojini Naidu and Sir Nizam Jung. India cannot produce their equals and it must be a source of infinite pride to us that our compatriots of Hyderabad alone among the others stand in the circle of modern English poets, equalling in some of their productions the very best of them.

Why Hyderabad, where Urdu and Persian reign supreme, should have produced three of the four best writers of English verse, is a problem for which I can offer no solution. There can be nothing very Parnassian in the climate nor anything captivating and inspiring about the scenery presented by our melancholy Musi. It is merely an accident—an accident of an accident—and we should be happy indeed of that fact.

Before the time of Nawab Sir Salar Jung the First, the English language was confined merely to correspondence between the British Resident and the Nizam's Prime Minister. A little later it used to break out in laboured eloquence at banquets and big dinners. But what a change do we witness today in our midst! Within the last half a century English education has made so rapid a stride that we may well say that we are nowhere behind the other provinces.

The first great stimulus to the spread of English education was given by Sir Salar Jung and then, in his official capacity as Director of Public Instruction, by Nawab Imadul Mulk Bahadur, who first turned to English poetry for the expression of some of his sentiments.

It must not be supposed that Nawab Imadul Mulk Bahadur acted as a pioneer in this respect. He was merely the first to write in English verse. There was no conscious imitation of his effort by any one. Those that wrote after him wrote because they felt the irrepressible urge of the poetic spirit in them and their mastery of the English language naturally impelled them to express themselves in that language. If Sarojini and Harindranath had not known English but only Bengali, they would both have sung in Bengali and Sir Nizam Jung would have written poetry in Persian if he had known no English. This is the reason why it is said that poets are born.

It might be said that as Sir Nizam, for instance, is not only a scholar in English but also in Persian, it is incomprehensible why he should have chosen English in preference to Persian as the vehicle for the expression of his poetic feelings. The subject is not so incomprehensible as it appears at first sight. It is after all a matter of inclination and personal choice. We cannot tell a poet in what language he should write and on what subject he should write. Moreover, we must remember that English is today as much a vernacular as any other language and what is of more significance it is in that language that many of us *think*.

I can assert the fact as an unquestionable certainty that Sarojini Naidu and Harindranath think in English though they are most powerfully moved, as is and ought to be natural, by Indian scenes and settings. Harindranath dives into Hindu philosophy and is very often completely overmastered by thoughts steeped in the wisdom of his country and yet for all that he thinks in English, not in Hindi or Bengali. The spirit of India may be strong upon him but the spirit of his thoughts is English and

what wonder is there that he should express himself in that language? In the case of Sarojini Naidu, it may be said, that her command over English is so great that for her to write poetry in English has been a matter not only of choice but also of necessity. In the case of Sir Nizam Jung who is an English and Persian scholar, and in the case of Nawab Imadul Mulk who was an English, Arabic and Persian scholar, it has been a matter of choice and not of necessity, so far as language is concerned.

The only question that lies before us is whether or no they have done well that which they attempted to do, no matter what the language adopted by them. In my introductory essay to every set of selections from each of the four, I have discussed in the best way I possibly could the merits and worth of each. Broadly speaking, there can be no question of the fact that every one of them has succeeded in his or her attempt though, of course, with varying degrees of success, whether compared with modern English poets, or among themselves, or with their own individual scholarship and attainments. Sir Nizam Jung might have done better in Persian and Nawab Imadul Mulk in Arabic, but this is an argument which comes under the class of speculative criticism. Judging their compositions as they stand before us the verdict must be given that they are good.

One point I would like to express is that not one of the four has written poetry from the standpoint of a professional poet. I mean, not one has written verse for the sake of a living. In one sense we may be proud of it as distinguishing us from the somewhat commercialised spirit which hovers over British poetry, but in another sense we must bemoan the fact. Not having been under the scourge of Necessity, they sang and wrote

when they pleased. They did not court the Muses but the Muses had to court them. And in this lies a tragedy—to me a very poignant tragedy. Sarojini has yet to write her best and perhaps may never do. Her “Sceptered Flute” might have to remain in her hands a broken flute. Harindranath, who has had the highest praise from English critics and is described by one of them as the possible successor of Sir Rabindranath Tagore, never sets himself seriously to work and at the present day is more bewitched by Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford than by the Muses. Nawab Sir Nizamat Jung writes for the sake of a little mental relaxation from the boredom of officialdom. Not one of these writes driven by Necessity.

Necessity is as much the mother of Poesy as of Invention. Homer struck his harp and sang for a living and so did the troubadours and minstrels of old. The poetic urge in Sarojini and Harindranath should have been supplemented by the urge of some sort of Necessity—not necessarily monetary necessity. In this respect the Fates have not been kind but unkind. Golden Thresholds and ‘Hillforts’ have kept the Muses as strangers on the threshold and wayfarers at the gates.

I have little else to say except to express my earnest hope that Hyderabad may extend to her poets a hearty reception and a fervent appreciation. By their culture and their compositions they have added lustre to the fame of this ancient city and have set a brilliant example before the rising generation. Poetry is an art which every one must try to cultivate whether one is a born poet or not and whether one has inspiration or not. Poetry being the elder sister to Prose, acquaintance with her will improve our familiarity with the latter and give

to our prose rhythm and richness. In this hope and with the hope of securing a wide audience for our poets, I send forth this Anthology and trust it will receive the attention it deserves on its own merits.

A. R. CHIDA

HYDERABAD-DECCAN,

25th March, 1930.

SAROJINI NAIDU .

SAROJINI NAIDU

Sarojini Naidu was born under the auspices of one of those bright stars of far-off constellations which the poets of Thessalian vales have said sing ceaselessly in their courses. Gandhervas and goddesses showered petals of white lotuses and whole flowers of midnight bloom on her white damasked cradle. Some one softly cooed on the conch of Jayadeva and some one lullabied on the flute of Krishna.

So was ushered into this world this matchless daughter of a matchless country.

The heavens smiled and lavished on her their choicest gifts. The hearth and the fireside had many excellences about them. Her father was one of the most learned men of his time. Her mother was one of the noblest whom Bengal produced in the last century. If the requisites for training were thus assured, so were traditions. The inspiration of a long line of devotees and ascetics, steeped in pietic love of the Vedas and the Upanishads, hovered over her immediate ancestors, as over those who went before them.

The father was a most erudite scholar and a scientist of wide repute. He was, withal, strange to say, a dreamer also. He believed he saw the yellow of the gold glint through the ^hwhite of the mercury. He was a man with a great mind, a large heart and of boundless affections—who thought deeply, spoke freely, laughed loudly, and took the world seriously yet joyously. He gave one guiding hand to the little child.

The mother was a sort of a Bengali mother of the Grachi. She was the very model of Brahmin womanhood, quiet, contented, self-effacing and pious. And

she was educated, possessing fair proficiency in Bengali—the language of Rabindranath Tagore. She was one who sang in the midst of her labours and at dusk and when night came softly on, translated some of the music of her heart into the language of poesy. She gave the second guiding hand to the little child.

And faithfully did the father and mother fulfil their pleasant duty. Sarojini had the gift of natural genius and they quietly, hopefully fostered it. Sarojini had the gift of eloquence, but its development was left to the days of her maidenhood. It developed like a flower, all unconsciously ; no atmosphere of a hot house was provided for its growth. And all the while, the traditions and tone of a good home swathed her with their influences.

The child grew into maidenhood and for the sake of her health and study was sent to England and there the Muse of Poetry took her in hand. The maiden began to dream dreams and see visions. She began to think in the language of Spenser and Shelley. She lived on English literature and her years at Girton laid the foundations of her immense knowledge of history and politics. She took no academic degrees but the amount of knowledge assimilated was great.

Then came the years of expression after the years of acquisition. Her thoughts instinctively turned to poetry as the channel of expression. Thoughts surged in her heart and became clamorous to reach the free air and the sunlight. And then she began to write and has gone on writing ever since.

It cannot be gainsaid that she ranks as one among the best poets of modern times from the closing days of Browning and Tennyson. Her position in India was supreme till her revered countryman, Rabindranath

Tagore, superseded her and took the laurels. Though it is true that Tagore is now supreme in India and is among the world's great, this triumphant achievement would not, perhaps, have been possible if Sarojini had not turned her thoughts from poetry to politics. While not taking herself seriously where poetry was concerned, she took herself seriously where politics was. Her natural eloquence, her marvellous command of phrase and inborn sympathy and urge towards an ever and higher form of service beckoned her, in fact, compelled her, and we know the result. Whatever may be one's estimate of her political creed and her political work, no one will disagree with me when I say that she is one of India's most precious possessions. Her intellect has been, and is, a source of inspiration to several thousands of young men and young women. Her political fervour and her political service have stirred up the spirit of emulation in the hearts of countless numbers of people. Her eloquence has captured the minds and galvanized the hearts of millions.

To hark back, however, Sarojini, I am afraid, is one of the might-have-beens in the world of poesy. She having deserted the Muse, the Muse is likely to desert her, and this once and for all. Long alienation is never fruitful. It breeds barrenness. While she was once in competition with Rabindranath Tagore and, unwittingly and not deliberately, gave up the contest and failed, by a strange ordinance of the gods of Parnassus, the race with Tagore for the evergreen laurel of myrtle will soon be contested for by her talented brother, Harindranath, who gives greater and richer promise of a *great* poet than Sarojini ever did. If Harindranath goes back to the Muse of Poetry and leaves his predilection for acting, born of a perverted poetic mood, he can soon outrace Tagore and take a very high place among not only the poets of

England but also of the world. A place in the Sun was Sarojini's, but Harindranath's it is likely to be. Sarojini shines only in the limited firmament of the poetry of England, and not in that of the world's and even in that firmament her brightness will soon dim. And why this is so we shall presently discuss.

As a poetess, she is, as she herself says, merely a song bird. There is no depth of thought in her compositions. In this respect, she is far inferior to her gifted brother, though in artistry of poetic construction she is, so far, superior to him. She sings, no doubt, of various themes but these songs have no permanent value in them. They are like certain wild flowers and flowers of gloom-haunted valleys and dells which, though gorgeous in colour and magnificent in fold of petal and setting of leaf, are yet without any fragrance which can be captured to air the parlours of princesses. Her pieces are for show; not for stimulation. They please the ear, but make no deep stir in the heart. They are sensuous and at times sense-less—melodiously sense-less.

All her pieces are, as she herself admits in one of her published letters to Mr. Arthur Symons, the British critic, "casual little things." Casual little poems truly they are; beautiful, yet lacking enduring beauty. They are blossoms that are born at sunrise and are dead at sunset.

She took herself seriously when a mere dreaming damsel of eleven, but when years of maturity came, wisdom increased and the changes and chances of life touched her heart and she felt the full mystery of life dawn upon her, she failed to take herself seriously. She has not yet given us "just that one poem" full of beauty and the spirit of greatness, and, having given which, she would

be "exultantly silent for ever." I am afraid she will never give it. *Mene, mene, tekel ubarsin.*

Turning to a critical study of her poetry, I take for my purpose her latest collection of songs entitled "The Sceptred Flute" published in New York. "The Sceptred Flute" contains some of her early, intermediary and latest poems which might perhaps have to be taken to be the last of the airs she would play. These poems are a sure indication of her very best and I do not think she will be able to write anything that will make her best but the second best. Even then she will before long cease to be given any of that literary respect which she enjoyed in the past. The respect was due more to the accident of time than to any real outstanding excellence of production.

Unlike her brother, Sarojini does not reveal much depth of thought. It is so because she is merely a song-bird haunting the borders of quiet pools and gently flowing streams. However, this song-bird of ours could catch something of the great infinity of thought and pour itself out in verses which melodious in words are nonetheless powerfully moving. Which of us would not be moved by these great lines from "The Soul's Prayer"?

Thou shalt drink deep of joy and fame,
And love shall burn thee like a fire,
And pain shall cleanse thee like a flame,
To purge the dross from thy desire.

So shall thy chastened spirit yearn
To seek from its blind prayer release,
And spent and pardoned, she to learn
The simple secret of My peace.

I, bending from my seven-fold height
Will teach thee of My quickening grace,
Life is a prism of My light
And Death the shadow of My face.

The last two lines are among the best lines I have chanced on touching the sublime theme of Life and Death :

*Life is a prism of My light,
And Death the shadow of My face.*

Unquestionably the prismatic ray of God's light is life and all life, but an infinitesimal part of a second's deflection of it is Death and as the shadow is but of a rapidly transient duration, Death is Life itself. Take again the following beautiful and bracing lines on "Transcience":

Nay, do not grieve tho' life be full of sadness,
Dawn will not veil her splendour for your grief,
Nor Spring deny her bright, appointed beauty
To lotus blossom and ashoka leaf.

Nay, do not pine, tho' life be dark with trouble,
Time will not pause or tarry on his way ;
To-day that seems so long, so strange, so bitter,
Will soon be some forgotten yesterday.

Nay, do not weep ; new hopes, new dreams, new faces,
The unspent joy of all the unborn years,
Will prove your heart a traitor to its sorrow,
And make your eyes unfaithful to their tears.

These lines immediately remind one of Arthur Clough's famous piece beginning " Say not the struggle naught availeth."

This is a piece which, with Clough's, is worth remembering. Here indeed, a poet of a high order speaks and speaking pours the Balm of Gilead on our troubled hearts, bereft of hope and ridden with fears. What

consolation and message of hope and courage are there not in the lines ?

To-day that seems so long, so strange, so bitter,
Will soon be some forgotten yesterday.

And the mourning heart shall have :

“ The unspent joy of all the unborn years.”

The song-bird speaks again with the great Voice of Truth in its lines on “ Life ” :

Children,
Till ye have bathed with great grief and fears,
And borne the conflict of dream-shattering years,
Wounded with fierce desire and worn with strife,
Children, ye have not lived : for this is life.

And what lines are these from the same piece !

And thirst with passionate longing for the things
That burn your brow with blood-red sufferings.

Touching the theme of “ Past and Future,” how exquisitely, pathetically, truthfully she sings :

And now the Soul stands in a vague, intense
Expectancy and anguish of suspense,
On the dim chamber-threshold . . . lo ! he sees
Like a strange, fated bride as yet unknown
Her tiny future shrinking there alone,
Beneath her marriage-veil of mysteries.

These lines are beautiful, beautiful, but lack power.
Hear Wordsworth about the past :

Not in entire nakedness,
Not in entire forgetfulness,
'But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God who is our Home.

And when the song-bird to itself answers as though with the voice of its mate, it sings with exquisite pathos and music and truth :

O Bird of Time, on your fruitful bough
 What are the songs you sing ?
 Songs of the glory and gladness of life,
 Of poignant sorrow and passionate strife,
 And the lilting joy of the spring ;
 Of hope that sows for the years unborn,
 And faith that dreams of a tarrying morn,
 The fragrant peace of the twilight's breath,
 And the mystic silence that men call death.

O Bird of Time, say where do you learn
 The changing measures you sing ?
 In blowing forests and breaking tides,
 In happy laughter of new-made brides,
 And the nests of the new-born spring ;
 In the dawn that thrills to a mother's prayer,
 And the night that shelters a heart's despair,
 In the sigh of pity, the cup of hate,
 And the pride of a soul that has conquered fate.

These lines are indeed passionately beautiful, entrancingly appealing :

“ Faith that dreams of a tarrying morn ”
 And “ The happy laughter of new-made brides.”

There is melody indeed in those lines.

Turning to another aspect of her production, one would have thought that Sarojini, who is not only a poet but also a great politician and patriot, would have written many pieces bearing on Patriotism, Nationalism, Aspirations and so on. These probably appeared to her excessively dry themes and her art quailed before the attempt.

However, she can do wonderfully well when she does enter on an attempt. Read "The Gift of India."

When the terror and tumult of hate shall cease
And life be refashioned on anvils of peace,
And your love shall offer memorial thanks,
To the comrades who fought in your dauntless ranks,
And you honour the deeds of the deathless ones,
Remember the blood of thy martyred sons !

And addressing her Mother, and the Mother of us all, she sings in stirring lines :

O young through all the immemorial years !
Rise, Mother, rise, regenerate from thy gloom,
And, like a bride high-mated with the spheres,
Beget new glories from thine ageless womb !
The future calls thee with a manifold sound
To crescent honours, splendours, victories vast ;
Waken, O slumbering Mother, and be crowned,
Who, once wert empress of the sovereign Past.

Now, turning to her voluptuous melody where words do the duty of music, sentences dance and stanzas do the saraband, I cannot but take her "Indian Dancers." It is indeed a marvellous achievement, though the effort to her must have been quite easy, as the style is very much under her command, as evidenced by other pieces.

Eyes ravished^d with rapture, celestially panting,
what passionate bosoms aflaming with fire !
Drink deep of the hush of the hyacinth heavens
that glimmer around them in fountains of light ;
O wild and entrancing the strain of keen music
that cleaveth the stars like a wail of desire,
And beautiful dancers with houri-like faces bewitch
the voluptuous watches of night.

The scents of red roses and sandalwood flatter and
die in the maze of their gem-tangled hair,
And smiles are entwining like magical serpents the
poppies of lips that are opiate-sweet ;

Their glittering garments of purple are burning
 like tremulous dawns in the quivering air,
 And exquisite, subtle and slow are the tinkle and
 tread of their rhythmical, slumber-soft feet.
 Now silent, now singing and swaying and swinging,
 like bosoms that bend to the breezes or showers
 Now wantonly winding, they flash, now they falter,
 and, lingering, languish in radiant choirs ;
 Their jewel-girt arms and warm, wavering, lily-long
 fingers enchant through melodious hours,
 Eyes ravished with rapture, celestially panting,
 what passionate bosoms aflaming with fire !

The “ Snake-Charmers ” is in a similar strain but the lines, as it were, untwine themselves :—

Whither dost thou hide from the magic of my flute-call ?
 In what moon-light—tangled meshes of perfume,
 From the clustering *Keowdas* guard the squirrels slumber,
 Where the deep woods glimmer with the jasmine’s bloom ?

In passing, I may remark, that the “ Snake-Charmers ” of Sarojini’s is somewhat inferior to the piece on the same subject by Sir Edwin Arnold. And, herein lies the magic of touch of the master artist even though the subject is a purely Indian one.

Turning to yet another aspect of her poetry, I may remark here that although she is very well acquainted with Persian, Sarojini has not attempted to give to this country any fruits of her appreciation of Persian poetry—the poems of Hafiz and Saadi, of Rumi and Nizami. There are only stray fruits and these by no means of the best or of the most luscious kind.

In “ A Song from Shiraz ” she sings :

From the Mosque-towers of Shiraz ere daylight begin
 My heart is disturbed by the loud muezzin,
 But what is the voice of his warning to me,
 That waketh the world to the atonement of sin ?

Then comes the chorus or refrain :

*The stars shall be scattered like jewels of glass
And Beauty be tossed like a shell in the sea,
Ere the lutes of their magical laughter surpass
The lute, of thy tears, O Mohammed Ali.*

And very much like a Persian piece is this on “Caprice” which is indeed excellent and of her very short pieces the best :

You held a wild flower in your finger-tips,
Idly you pressed it to indifferent lips,
Idly you tore its crimsoned leaves apart . . .
Alas ! it was my heart.

You held a wine-cup in your finger-tips,
Lightly you raised it to indifferent lips,
Lightly you drank and flung away the bowl . . .
Alas ! it was my soul.

As for pieces containing sheer melody of words I cannot choose one better than “Leili” as a representative of the class.

The serpents are asleep among the poppies,
The fireflies light the soundless panther’s way
To tangled paths where shy gazelles are straying,
And parrot-plumes outshine the dying day.
O soft : the lotus-buds upon the stream
Are stirring like sweet maidens when they dream.
A red-tear-mark on the azure brow of Heaven,
The golden moon burns sacred, solemn, bright ;
The winds are dancing in the forest-temple,
And swooning at the holy feet of Night,
Hush ! in the silence mystic voices sing
And make the gods their incense-offering.

In a preceding paragraph I said that Sarojini is sometimes melodiously senseless. This “Leili” of hers is an instance in point. It is super-excellent for sheer melody

of words but there is also melodious nonsense in them. To begin with, it is difficult to know what exactly this piece is meant for—who or what is “Leili”? The idea of fireflies lighting the soundless panther’s way is a beautiful poetic conceit beautifully expressed, but entirely contrary to a fact in Nature. The panther does not need even the light of the moon to light his way, let alone the light of fireflies. Then again, gazelles do not stray in the night, but after dawn. The poet having made us think of night by referring to fireflies, speaks of the dying day the glories of which are outshone by parrot-plumes. There cannot be twilight and night at the same time.

Having said this, I must say the master artist has given us a splendid touch in

A caste-mark on the *azure* brow of Heaven

But, here again, can the night be blue when midnight is on and the moon but the streak of a crescent? The idea is splendid indeed of comparing the dancing and swooning winds to the ecstasies and trances of devotees at the shrines of their favourite deities. The moon burns the sacred lamps, mystic voices sing and the gods are there with golden censers offering fragrant incenses.

There are poems which are purely India in setting, such as folklore songs, bazaar scenes and so on, and these are well represented in the Selections that follow, and, further, as they need no comment, I need not reproduce any here. I would invite the special attention of Western readers to “The Festival of Serpents.” It gives an insight into the peasant’s belief which follows the primitive principle the world over of trying to propitiate the most that which one fears and dreads the most.

Now, I shall take one very beautiful piece, the "Pearl" writing on which in very exquisite language, the poet bemoans the sin of selfishness. Pearls of lustre which lie deep down in the sea, and gems of radiance which lie in the bowels of the earth, are of no use to man and so are the gifts and graces of Heaven which mortals keep to themselves instead of allowing them to fling their fragrance on others.

How long shall it suffice

Merely to hoard in thine unequalled rays

The bright sequestered colours of the sun,

O pearl above all price,

And beautiful beyond all need of praise,

World-coveted but yet possessed of none,

Content in thy proud self-dominion ?

Shall not some ultimate

And unknown hour deliver thee, and attest

Life's urgent and inviolable claim

To bind and consecrate

Thy glory on some pure and bridal breast,

Or set thee to enhance with flawless flame

A new-born nation's coronal of fame ?

Or wilt thou self-denied

Forgo such sweet and sacramental ties

As weld Love's delicate bonds of ecstasy,

And in a barren pride

Of cold, unfruitful freedom that belies

The inmost secret of fine liberty

Return unblest into the primal sea ?

Every mother is a poet at heart and fortunate the mother who has the gift to express in poetry the feelings that are nearest her heart. To the babe who has no

language but a cry and a smile how sweetly Sarojini sings :—

From groves of spice,
O'er fields of rice,
Athwart the lotus-stream,
I bring for you,
Aglint with dew
A little lovely dream.

That lovely little dream was stolen for the babe by the adventurous poet-mother from regions haunted by fire-flies and from fairy *neem* and poppy-bole.

The music in Sarojini, in a way, muffled the philosophy in her. But the Oriental's age-long, almost primitive love for calm contemplation, love for subjective thought when the soul turns upon itself and losing sight of the external world, becomes a spiritual entity, is strongly evidenced in her lines on the Lord Buddha seated on a lotus.

Lord Buddha, on thy Lotus-throne,
With praying eyes and hands elate,
What mystic rapture dost thou own,
Immutable and ultimate ?
What peace, unravished of our ken,
Annihilate from the world of men ?

Having this piece in his mind, Dr. James H. Cousins says : " When she touches the deep permanent element of life she rises to a fine power of phrase, a clear energy of thought, a luminosity and reserve that reach the level of mastery."

Dr. Cousins' references to " power of phrase " and " clear energy of thought " (not often in evidence, however) cannot be better illustrated than by

All our mortal moments are
A session of the Infinite.

And again,

To-morrow's unborn griefs depose
The sorrow's of our yesterday.
Dream yields to dream, strife follows strife,
And Death unweaves the webs of Life.

To Sarojini, "the Nirvana of thy Lotus-throne" is nothing but Peace, perfect peace and it is for this her soul hungers. It is this which is

The heaven-ward hunger of the soul.

It must not be understood that when she writes exultantly of the Buddhist Nirvana she has in her mind the Buddhist conception of Nirvana. Most certainly not. All she speaks about and refers to is the hunger of the human soul for the peace that dwells about the lotus-throne of God.

We have so far enjoyed the music of Sarojini's "Sceptred Flute" and we have also complained whenever we detected a rift in the lute. It only remains for me to say that I am firm in the belief that every admirer of this wonderful woman of our country will join with me in expressing the hope that she may have so great a storm of inspiration that she could not but be swayed and tossed by it so powerfully as to give us one great piece or one great book which will unmistakably partake of the great and the permanent. She can sing, but must sing to some purpose; she can indulge in melancholy melody, but her melody must not only move the senses but also exalt the soul. If she had not the capacity there would be no room for the expression of so great a hope—and her past achievements must be to her a beckoning star.

SELECTIONS

TO A BUDDHA SEATED ON A LOTUS

Lord Buddha, on thy Lotus-throne,
 With praying eyes and hands elate,
 What mystic rapture dost thou own,
 Immutable and ultimate?

What peace, unravished of our ken,
 Annihilate from the world of men?

The wind of change for ever blows
 Across the tumult of our way,
 To-morrow's unborn griefs depose
 The sorrows of our yesterday.
 Dream yields to dream, strife follows strife,
 And Death unweaves the webs of Life.

For us the travail and the heat,
 The broken secrets of our pride,
 The strenuous lessons of defeat,
 The flower deferred, the fruit denied;
 But not the peace, supremely won,
 Lord Buddha, of thy Lotus-throne.

With fragile hands we seek to gain
 Our inaccessible desire,
 Diviner summits to attain,
 With faith that sinks and feet that tire;
 But nought shall conquer or control
 The heavenward hunger of our soul.

The end, elusive and afar,
 Still lures us with its beckoning flight,
 And all our mortal moments are
 A session of the Infinite,
 How shall we reach the great, unknown
 Nirvana of thy Lotus-throne?

PALANQUIN-BEARERS

Lightly, O lightly, we bear her along,
 She sways like a flower in the wind of our song;
 She skims like a bird on the foam of a stream,
 She floats like a laugh from the lips of a dream.
 Gaily, O gaily we glide and we sing,
 We bear her along like a pearl on a string.

Softly, O softly we bear her along,
 She hangs like a ear in the dew of our song;
 She springs like a beam on the brow of a tide,
 She falls like a tear from the eyes of a bride.
 Lightly, O lightly we glide and we sing,
 We bear her along like a pearl on a string.

NIGHTFALL IN THE CITY OF HYDERABAD

See how the speckled sky burns like a pigeon's throat,
 Jewelled with embers of opal and peridote.

See the white river that flashes and scintillates,
 Curved like a tusk from the mouth of the city-gates.

Hark, from the minaret, how the *muezzin's* call.
 Floats like a battle-flag over the city wall.

From trellised balconies, languid and luminous
 Faces gleam, veiled in a splendour voluminous.

Leisurely elephants wind through the winding lanes,
 Swinging their silver bells hung from their silver chains.

Round the high Char Minar sounds of gay cavalcades
 Blend with the music of cymbals and serenades.

Over the city bridge Night comes majestic,
 Borne like a queen to a sumptuous festival.

THE PEARL

How long shall it suffice

Merely to hoard in thine unequalled rays
 The bright sequestered colours of the sun,
 O pearl above all price,

And beautiful beyond all need of praise,
 World-coveted but yet possessed of none,
 Content in thy proud self-dominion?

Shall not some ultimate
 And unknown hour deliver thee, and attest
 Life's urgent and inviolable claim
 To bind and consecrate
 Thy glory on some pure and bridal breast,
 Or set thee to enhance with flawless flame
 A new-born nation's coronal of flame ?
 Or wilt thou self-denied
 Forgo such sweet and sacramental ties
 As weld Love's delicate bonds of ecstasy,
 And in a barren pride
 Of cold, unfruitful freedom that belies
 The inmost secret of fine liberty
 Return unblest into the primal sea ?

GUERDON

To field and forest
 The gifts of the spring,
 To hawk and to heron
 The pride of their wing ;
 Her grace to the panther,
 Her tints to the dove.....
 For me, O my Master,
 The rapture of Love !
 To the hand of the diver
 The gems of the tide,
 To the eyes of the bridegroom
 The face of his bride ;
 To the heart of a dreamer
 The dreams of his youth.....
 For me, O my Master,
 The rapture of Truth !
 To priests and to prophets
 The joy of their creeds,
 To kings and their cohorts
 The glory of deeds ;
 And peace to the vanquished
 And hope to the strong.....
 For me, O my Master,
 The rapture of Song !

CRADLE-SONG

From groves of spice,
 O'er fields of rice,
 Athwart the lotus-stream,
 I bring for you,
 Aglint with dew
 A little lovely dream.

Sweet, shut your eyes,
 The wild fire-flies
 Dance through the fairy *neem* ;
 From the poppy-bole
 For you I stole
 A little lovely dream.

Dear eyes, good-night,
 In golden light
 The stars around you gleam ;
 On you I press
 With cares
 A little lovely dream.

DEVOTION

Take my flesh to feed your dogs if you choose,
 Water your garden-trees with my blood if you will,
 Turn my heart into ashes, my dreams into dust—
 Am I not yours, O Love, to cherish or kill ?

Strangle my soul and fling it into the fire !
 Why should my true love falter or fear or rebel ?
 Love, I am yours to lie in your breast like a flower,
 Or burn like a weed for your sake in the flame of hell.

IF YOU CALL ME

If you call me I will come
 Swifter, O my Love,
 Than a trembling forest deer
 Or a panting dove.
 Swifter than a snake that flies
 To the charmer's thrall
 If you call me I will come
 Fearless what befall.

If you call me, I will come
 Swifter than desire,
 Swifter than the lightning's feet
 Shod with plumes of fire.
 Life's dark tides may roll between,
 Or Death's deep chasms divide—
 If you call me I will come
 Fearless what betide.

WELCOME

Welcome, O fiery Pain !
 My heart unseared, unstricken,
 Drinks deep thy fervid rain,
 My spirit-seeds to quicken.
 Welcome, O tranquil Death !
 Thou hast no ills to grieve me,
 Who com'st with Freedom's breath
 From sorrow to retrieve me.
 Open, O vast Unknown,
 Thy sealed mysterious portal !
 I go to seek mine own
 Vision of Love immortal.

NAWAB SIR NIZAMAT JUNG BAHADUR

NAWAB SIR NIZAMAT JUNG BAHADUR

Nawab Sir Nizamât Jung Bahadur is one of the finest products of our day of the union of Eastern and Western culture. Endowed with special gifts, a strenuous student and a deep thinker, a philosopher who believes in the practical entities of life and their tremendous influence on life and on the march of events, and yet a poet who feels his heart stir at the passage across of it of every sublime and beautiful thought, he is among the best fitted to interpret the East to the West and the West to the East. So far, however, the Nawab has done little or nothing to give to the world of thought even small instalments of the best and highest within him. When Law and officialdom claimed him as their own, the claim upon him of Literature—Poetry in particular—lost its fascination and its urge. He has all along, doubtless, been an insatiable student and a calm and quiet thinker, but he has been a husbandman who has not offered to others the fruits of his labours in the field of thought. He has hid his harvest in a close-locked barnyard and covered his candle with a bushel. The coming years of retirement might effect a change in his attitude and we may have the wonderful pleasure of being asked to sit at an intellectual banquet when, along with savoury dishes, mellow wines will be served. Or, it may be, we shall never be invited to such a feast and thus have occasion to mourn the exhibition of a modesty which has perversity as its most distinguishing mark.

Nawab Sir Nizamât Jung Bahadur is known as an English and Persian scholar of the very first rank, but as a writer of English verse he is not so very well known. He is,

however, better known as a poet in English literary circles than in Indian, and even in Hyderabad literary circles. The measure of appreciation that is due to him for the purity of his diction and strength of expression is not of that degree which one should, or would, expect. The reason is that the Nawab is one of those men—their number is not great at present—who write more for the supreme pleasure of writing than for the glittering pleasure of publishing. This is a trait in our scholarly Knight which, while it deserves intense admiration, also deserves little or no encouragement from the reading public. To that which has been written by a writer, whether it be prose, or poetry, or philosophy, the public have a claim, provided the writer himself has approved that which he has written. Beyond a few sonnets and “Rudel of Blaye”—a pathetic romance of the days of the troubadours—Sir Nizam has published nothing in book-form. Stray pieces appear at sporadic intervals; and some of them are of such merit that one can, I think, justifiably venture to express the hope that more and more of these pieces may come, and, if necessary, if I may say so, in an epidemic form, so that we may not only read and delight ourselves but select some for a posy of poesy. Even these fugitive pieces are not without outstanding merit. Notable among these, as apart from the sonnets, must be reckoned his “India to England.” It appeared in the London “Times” on the day our Indian Troops landed at Marseilles. It was very warmly received and praised for its lofty sentiment and simple diction.

There is considerable nobility of thought in this seemingly ordinary but stirring piece of poetry. Sir Nizam says to England, on behalf of his countrymen, that while the many millions of India would clasp the sword of justice but, for want of training, could not,

yet that their hearts—the hearts of millions—were with England who need fear no disloyalty.

Their heart-strings round thy heart entwine
They are, they ever will be thine
In life—in death !

It was this passionate loyalty proclaimed to the world in unexaggerated but appealing poetry which made “India to England” famous. Our hearts’ loyalty is due to England not only in times of war but also in times of peace, not because she happens to rule us but because she it is who first gave us Justice and Liberty and as the poet puts it :

Thou found’st them, whom thy touch hath made
Men, and to whom thy breath conveyed
A nobler life !

In this piece, small as it is, Sir Nizamut has given us a sample of his powers in laying hold of a splendid conception and clothing it in diction that is simple yet moving. The touches, though apparently simple, are those of a masterhand and no lover of good poetry would hesitate to openly express his fervent hope that more and more of poetry of such excellence may be vouchsafed to us and the country.

The point has not so far been emphasised and hence I would here mention it by remarking that with this timely piece Sir Nizamut rendered a distinct service to England and to India. He told England what we Indians felt in our hearts and so strengthened her sinews: and he told India what she owed to England and what her attitude should be and so kept her attuned to the height of those great and glorious services rendered on the fields of Flanders and in almost all the zones of war.

Nawab Sir Nizamut Jung’s first publication is a small, skimpy volume entitled “Sonnets” which was

published in 1918 in London by Erskine Macdonald. A highly appreciative and complimentary foreword is written by Mr. R. C. Frazer who supplements it with a very interesting note on the history of the English sonnet in English literature. The volume contains 24 sonnets, with a prologue and an epilogue quite in the style of a mediæval composition. Speaking from the point of view of really high class poetry not one of these sonnets can be considered to be of any high order of merit, or of any striking beauty either. There is no variety or profundity of thought in any of them and all of them deal with only one subject—Love.

Love, no doubt, is an inexhaustible subject, but in dealing with it one cannot only exhaust oneself but also exhaust one's readers. These sonnets, I understand, were first written in 1917, that is to say, when Sir Nizamut was past the meridian of life and his thoughts and ideas had acquired ripe maturity. And yet, what does he give to the world but twenty-four feeble though perfectly constructed sonnets, only two or three of which are worth cherishing. It may be called poetry, with dignity of diction and classical restraint of expression, but it is nonetheless poetry of the sort which, having once read, one is more inclined to forget than recollect. It is not of the category which Robert L. and characterizes as "memorable"—which, unfortunately, a vast amount of modern poetry is not.

One is inclined to wonder, and justifiably so, that a person of Sir Nizamut's deep culture and acumen should have given to the English-knowing public, and, that too, of England, compositions which he could not but have known, if he had been just to himself, were lacking in intrinsic merit, though structurally quite admirable. Surely,

Sir Nizamut did not give those pieces to the English literary world merely to show that an Indian also could write sonnets, passable or not. He must have taken himself seriously, and if he did so and produced such work, he did himself great injustice.

His "Rudel of Blaye," published in Hyderabad in 1926, is better than his sonnets in one sense, that is to say, it reveals his style in the narration of events (the narrative art) and deals with different situations and topics and not, like his sonnets, confined only to Love. As a poetical composition "Rudel of Blaye" is good enough in its way and can compare favourably with some works of English poets in the same metrical style and in that peculiar diction. But, it is not as full of colour and emotion as one would wish, and has more of outward than inward beauty. There is no question of the fact that Sir Nizamut has, as is evidenced in "Rudel," great command of English but this acquirement is not necessarily a compensation for the want of poetic fervour and idealism. The lines are chiselled enough, but somehow they do not breathe life and poetry. They breathe prosody all right, though! Nawab Sir Nizamut Jung would do well to do away with excessive restraint and infuse more spirit into his poetic diction which appears stereotyped. His mediæval rhyming dictionary and an excess of the sedate and sombre manner of writing have ruined his poetry and nothing great is likely to come from him if Prosody reigns over his Poetry. With his taste for the classics he can assuredly set aside restraint and yet be restrained. The introduction of Red Tape into the realms of poesy is a dangerous procedure. It needs no telling that the poet must be, above all things, a singer and not merely a writer of chaste yet colourless stanzas.

Before writing in any detail on "Rudel of Blaye," Sir Nizamat's longest composition, I shall give the story of Rudel as given by the poet himself as an introduction to his book. It is taken from the "Provençal Lives of the Troubadours" and reads as follows:—

"Jaufre Rudel was a right noble prince of Blaye; and he loved the Countess of Tripoli without having seen her, because of her great excellence and virtue, of which the pilgrims who came from Antioch brought the report. And he made in her honour many sweet songs with fair melodies and with few words.

"So greatly did he long to see her that he took the Cross and embarked upon the seas to gain sight of her. But in the ship there fell upon him such grave illness that those who were with him thought he was dying. Nevertheless, they brought him to Tripoli and carried him to a guest-house where he lay as one dead.

"And they made known to the Countess that he was there; and she came to his bedside and took him into her arms. And he knew that it was she, for his sight and speech came back to him; and he praised and thanked God who had let him live long enough to see her. And so he died in the arms of the Countess; and she caused build for him an honourable sepulchre in the Church of the Temple at Tripoli.

"And the self-same day she consecrated herself to God, and became a nun because of her great sorrow for him and for grief at his death."

In a book containing some one hundred stanzas there are unfortunately only a few stanzas which deal with

the sublimer problems of life. Here is one stanza with a great spiritual appeal in it. It speaks with the voice of a noble philosophy :

In Death we waken to Reality,
 And Error's myriad phantoms fly before
 Truth which the veil of thought can hide no more.
 Desires and passions too like shadows flee ;
 Time, space and circumstance all cease to be.
 Life's dreams thus past, and all its travails o'er
 The pure-eyed soul regains the destined shore
 And stands, O Power benign, before Love's throne and Thee :

There is profound thought in the line "Truth which the veil of thought can hide no more." What is the significance of this line? "Words," said the great Talleyrand, Napoleon's foreign minister, "have been given to man to conceal his thoughts." And Sir Nizamut goes many steps further and says that thoughts veil Truth itself. Could it be possible? Yes, it is not only a possibility but a certainty. It is confusion of thought, want of depth of thought, which hide Truth—the fundamentals of life. Our very thoughts, therefore, serve as a veil over the divine Truth which lies hidden in the womb of the great realities of life. If words are made use of by man to conceal his thoughts—to be insincere and hypocritical in speech—so thoughts also play the hypocrite with him and cast a curtain over the realities of life which, failing complete realization here, will be realized after we waken into higher life—through Death.

There is one more stanza which rises to a great height and reveals to us the religious beauty of his philosophy.

Addressing Beauty he cries with true poetic fervour and energy wedded to sublime thought :

Immortal Beauty ! Be thou still the theme
Of the heart's worship and its fervent song.
Still let the soul, by Faith and Love made strong,
See in God's works, though as a transient gleam,
The mystic light that veils thy form supreme !
Still let thy fleeting images that throng
Before the mind their magic spell prolong
Until man's life on earth becomes a heavenly dream !

Rightly enough Sir Nizam-at Jung gives to Beauty a very sublime import and mantles it with the sanctities of religion. When this is done, Beauty is truly immortal and becomes sister to Truth and then comes about the sublime synonym that Beauty is Truth and Truth Beauty. Here the poet admires and adores not the outward but the inward Beauty and hence his address to it is from a spiritual standpoint—as when he says :

For beauty such as this my heart did pine,
And now it comes to haunt my waking dreams.
Hers is a soul illumined with the beams
Of truth that comes to man by grace divine.

And, again, as when he says :

Ah ! Beauty is a thing of earthly mould
If but in form and feature it reside.
Dust unto dust ; so ends the pomp and pride
Of form and feature when the heart is cold.

Describing this conception of Beauty, Sir Nizam-at rises once again to a lofty height and to accompany him will be a pleasure to all serious-minded men who are swayed by poetry of a high order of construction in the

realms of philosophic thought. To Beauty he gives great visions of Eternity itself and sings :

Thine are our visions of Eternity ;
 Thine too the songs that tremble on the tongue,
 As echoes of celestial songs, unsung
 'Tis thine to stir the soul to ecstasy
 With wafted strains of far-heard minstrelsy
 From realms where Faith and Hope are ever young,
 Where dawning stars like blossoms newly sprung
 Find life's renewal in Love's hidden harmony.

Passing on to other exhibitions of his philosophic thought, Sir Nizamat describes the dreams of one's youth in these arresting lines :

Dreams of my youth, they fade but cannot die ;
 Theirs are the songs that, silenced echo still
 Within my heart, its twilight gloom to thrill
 With yearning hopes that waken but a sigh !

And a chaste maiden he beautifully describes :

Hers is a soul illumined with the beams
 Of truth that comes to man by grace divine.

In the same stanza from which I have taken the lines given above, there occurs the line :

Me seems her Beauty is the smile of God !

On the first reading one would, I fear, either take this line to be a first rate figure of speech or, on the other hand, as exaggerated and hyperbolic and forming an example of poetry exceeding the frontiers of permissible figures in dealing with things divine. But, we must remember that Sir Nizamat when he speaks of Beauty speaks invariably of inward Beauty and his comparison is permissible and justifiable. An exceedingly beautiful

character can be likened to a smile of God ; for, in this wide universe there is nothing more beautiful than human character enshrined in human personality.

There is considerable power in the following lines:

The Hand traced in characters divine
 Upon Life's scroll the mystery of Doom,
 Shot light through Chaos and primæval gloom
 And bade its beams o'er rolling worlds to shine.

Describing the stricken Odierna standing by her wonderful lover, he says :

Silent she stands, but drops no woman's tear
 From eyes that burn. The pent heart heaves no sigh.
 A voiceless prayer mounts up to God on high
 And peace descends with faith that knows no fear.

The first two lines are excellent and have a classic cut about them. I can imagine a woman stricken with supreme grief of whom it could be said :

Silent she stands, but drops no woman's tear
 From eyes that burn.

Thus sorrow parches the fountain of tears and we often become marble statues hiding a torn and mangled heart.

It is poetry and diction of this type—of which Sir Nizamut is quite capable—which one expects from him and he disappoints us sadly when he gives us but sporadic specimens of them. He must remember that his productions are judged from the standpoint of the depth of his culture and experience. We are first and foremost taking his capacity and capabilities into consideration.

For instance, there is the touch of the master in the lines :

What need of question? Look and we shall find
Within our hearts the guide whose aid is never far.

And again,

And glory shall be ours in death or life :
There is a heaven in the heart of strife—
To which we'll carve our way with faith and dauntless
will !

If the cause is just and noble, there is indeed heaven in the heart of every strife which one must reach with faith and dauntless will.

I know not how I can best conclude this section of my introductory note on "Rudel of Blaye" except were it to say that Sir Nizam Jung could easily, very easily indeed, give the Indian world of literature epics and ballads dealing with our national history. His verses have that flavour about them which will serve him marvellously well should he but attempt to embalm in high-class poetry the stirring and noble deeds of our forefathers. Indian history is not bankrupt in this respect. The Hindu epics can well be drawn upon. Griffiths of Ramayana fame can well be improved—taking his English translation itself. And there are the Arabian and Persian poets who deserve to be presented to the world in a classic English garb.

Is it too much to hope that Sir Nizam Jung will give himself the trouble to place Indo-Anglian literature under an eternal debt of gratitude to him? He has the ability, the craftsmanship, the classical knowledge—the one thing required is a desire on his part to render a great literary service to his country and his countrymen.

Turning to Sir Nizamat's "Sonnets," I must commend their structural perfection and at the same time complain against their deficiency in the matter of variety of subject. There is only one theme and that theme is Love. Love deserves treatment, no doubt, as all of us have something or other to say about it, though all of us say the same thing, only the manner being different. But, are there not other themes for a man with the culture of Sir Nizamat Jung? And even these sonnets, as they are, reveal no greatness of thought nor sublimity of diction. They are, more or less, stereotyped in idea.

The sonnet, "Love's Silence," is one of his best and well represents the hopeful lament of a lover who dwells "apart and far," through circumstance, from his dear love and whose affection is of the sublime order. The lines

Silence, the voice of God, alone must be

Love's voice for thee, beloved as thou art.

read beautiful, impressive, classical, but it is much to be regretted that in speaking of human love for a human being, the poet permits himself the lamentable privilege of identifying the voice of love with the voice of God. It is not pardonable even though the voice of God is described as silence.

If I were asked to select Sir Nizamat's best sonnet I should say it is the one entitled "'Twi'x't star and star." It expresses the hopeless love on earth of one for another. Conventions stand in the way and, perhaps, circumstances also. Out of the inexpressible anguish of his heart and yet with his soul infused with a wonderful philosophy

of hope and faith and the workings of Immortal Love,
the unhappy lover sings :

Not here,—not here, where weak conventions mar
Life's hopes and joys, Love's beauty, truth and grace,
Must I come near thee, greet thee face to face.
Pour in thine ear the songs and sighs that are
My heart's best offerings. But in regions far,
Where Love's ethereal pinions may embrace
Beauty divine—in the clear interspace
Of twilight silence betwixt star and star.

And in the smiles of cloudless skies serene,
In Dawn's first blush and Sunset's ling'ring glow,
And in the glamour of the Moon's chaste beams—
My soul meets thine, and there thine image seen,
More real than life, doth to lone heart show
Such charms as live in Memory's haunting dreams !

Many great souls have loved in this manner and like
Dante and Beatrice attained the unattainable in

the clear interspace
Of twilight silence betwixt star and star.

Sir Nizamat's philosophy of Love is a triumphant philosophy. It is triumphant because it is rooted in Faith, based on Hope, and hitched to the starry chariot of Truth. Poetry of this sort ennobles and exalts one and I must repeat my complaint that more and more of this kind of poetry has not been given to us.

Before passing on I am constrained to remark that even so finished an artist like Sir Nizamat imitates old Homer in one aspect of his weakness—to wit, the unseemly faculty of nodding at times. What does he mean by saying—

And in the *glamour* of the moon's *chaste* beams.

Are not the words *glamour* and *chaste* almost antithetical? Beams that are full of glamour cannot at the same time have chastity about them. *Soft radiance* or *lambent radiance* are the phrases which come very near to the word *chaste*. What a mistake!—and *Et tu Brute!*

In the “Selections” I have included a piece entitled “Wealth” which was contributed to a recent number of Mr. Pickthall’s *Islamic Culture*; also included is a piece called “The Persian Poet and the Nightingale”; a piece on “Plato”; and a magnificent sonnet on the human soul which appeared in one of the issues of the *Nizam College Magazine*. The Nawab’s famous piece “India to England” is also included.

Many will doubtless appreciate Sir Nizam’s sonnet on the Soul and be thankful to him for giving them so splendid a conception of its essence, its worth, its nature and future. To him (and how exceedingly true it is!) the soul must be synonymous *in essence*, and, therefore also, in manifestation, with Love. Love and love alone can be and must be the measure of the soul’s worth and in love it must have its being. It is for the soul which is devoid of love doth Heaven ordain—

The death that knows no immortality.

The grave that holds no promise of re-birth.

The poet does not stop with this conception of the human soul. If in Love the human soul has its birth and its being—in service and in obedience to the commands of God must be its continued manifestation on earth. Only by thus living can the soul find, in love and through love, eternal life. Here he preaches no sentimental, or even metaphysical love but love that ever stands translated in action, in deed and in service. This

is not a new message, but a message which every great soul has given, and must give, to humanity from hour to hour lest the eternal truth of love and love's service should be lost in the strife and hectic flush of what we call life.

Among the sonnets which have not been included in any book a very excellent one headed "The Persian Poet and the Nightingale" appeared in *Islamic Culture* for January 1928. In it Sir Nizamat speaks with the spirit of a genuine Persian poet, only the vestment of his sentiments is English verse.

On reading it one is at once taken back to Shelley's celebrated "Ode to the Skylark" and one is compelled to realize the fact that the poetic spirit in all great poets is more or less of the same nature and substance and proceeds from one and only one source the springs of which are in the bosom of some far off celestial sphere. This is, so far as I know, the only sonnet in which Sir Nizamat attempts to interpret for us the soul of a Persian poet—the soul which animated Hafiz and Saadi—and right well has he succeeded in his attempt with words and lines which go very near to a perfect mating with sentiment. It is, indeed, a very beautiful poetic thought—and who knows it is not true to fact?—that the nightingale should be the one messenger of Nature

To wake his brooding soul that fain would hear
A voice that in his heart lay prisoned long.

And who shall say that it is not true that

His voice is but the voice of his own soul,
The voice of rapture melting into pain.

Very often the poet by the witchery of some outside voice—of woman, or music or song—is taken into a state of “tranced ecstacy” and feels upon his heart’s chord the touch

at whose bidding throng
Commingling joy and pain and hope and fear.

It can also be very truly said of a poet and of the nightingale that

Both yearn for happier haunts, serener skies.

In the last three lines of his sonnet, Sir Nizamat has made it appear that the poet’s “voice of rapture melting into pain” cries not out at all, but the heart, as it were, sings its own sad songs to itself and no comforting answer comes from on high. He says :

His heart’s song pulsing ’neath the soft control
Of hers, that soars and sinks and soars again
Till amongst the fading stars it fails and dies.

Songs are not always unwittingly suppressed and do not fade away among the fading stars but, as often as not, soar above to stand in the steadfast blue, veritable morning stars of beauty and of life. And yet, who knows how many of the world’s finest pieces have found a grave for themselves in the very home of their birth—the soul of a Shelley or a Shakespeare or of a Sheley unknown to the world ?

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear ;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Gray’s wonderful lines have a newer and a richer meaning for us read in the light of Sir Nizamat’s lines.

It would ill become me, I think, if I did not allude to Nawab Sir Nizam Jung's translation into English verse of His Exalted Highness the Nizam Sir Mir Osman Ali Khan Bahadur's Persian *Ghazals*. I am including some choice specimens which will serve to show Sir Nizam's ability as a translator and His Exalted Highness' love for poetic expression and the range and extent of his sentiments. His powers of expression must be to our ruler a source—a very pleasant source—of not merely relaxation from the anxious burdens of administration but of recreation as well. Sir Nizam has fulfilled his loyal labour of love with credit to himself and justice to his poet-ruler, I cannot but express the hope that this reference to His Exalted Highness' *Ghazals* as they stand freely translated into English may bring to their reading a large number of all those who are interested in indigenous literature.

SELECTIONS

INDIA TO ENGLAND

O England ! in thine hour of need,
 When Faith's reward and valour's meed
 Is death or glory.

When Fate indites with biting brand,
 Clasped in each warrior's stiff'ning hand,
 A Nation's story.

Though weak our hands, which fain would clasp
 The warrior's sword with warrior's grasp.
 On Victory's field.

Yet turn, O mighty Mother ! turn
 Unto the million hearts that burn
 To be thy shield !

Thine equal justice, mercy, grace,
 Have made a distant alien race
 A part of thee !

'Twas thine to bid their souls rejoice,
 When first they heard the living voice
 Of Liberty !

Unmindful of their ancient name,
 Their fathers' honour, glory, fame,
 And sunk in strife.

Thou found'st them, whom thy touch hath made
 Men, and to whom thy breath conveyed
 A nobler life !

They, whom thy love hath guarded long,
 They, whom thy care hath rendered strong
 In love and faith.

Their heart-strings round thy heart entwine;
 They are, they ever will be thine,
 In life—in death !

THE PERSIAN POET AND THE NIGHTINGALE

From starlit groves the nightingale her song
 Sends forth upon the night to greet his ear,
 To wake his brooding soul that fain would hear
 A voice that in his heart lay prisoned long.
 Some chord it touches at whose bidding throng
 Commingling joy and pain and hope and fear.
 And yearnings dumb that waited many a year
 The tranced ecstasy her notes prolong.
 Her voice is but the voice of his own soul,
 The voice of rapture melting into pain :
 Both yearn for happier haunts, serener skies,
 His heart's song pulsing 'neath the soft control
 Of hers, that soars and sinks and soars again
 Till 'mongst the fading stars it fails and dies.

LOVE'S SILENCE

When through thine eyes the light of Heav'n doth shine
 Upon my being, and thy whisper brings,
 As the soft rustlings of an angel's wings,
 Joy to my soul and peace and grace divine ;
 When thus thy body and thy soul combine
 To weave the mystic web thy beauty flings
 Around my heart, whose thrilling silence rings
 With Hope's unuttered songs that make thee mine,—
 Ah, then, O Love ! what need of words have we,
 Who speak in feeling to each other's heart ?
 Words are too weak Love's message to impart,
 Too frail to live through Love's eternity.
 Silence, the voice of God, alone must be
 Love's voice for thee, beloved as thou art.

THE HUMAN SOUL

God's kingdom is thine own—all heaven and earth
 Are thine, O Soul, for all eternity !
 Thou art in all Creation, and for thee
 Thy love shall be the measure of thy worth.

In love thou hast thy being : in the dearth
 Of thy heart's love doth heaven ordain for thee
 The death that knows no immortality,
 The grave that holds no promise of re-birth.
 Lost thou thyself in all that God hath made—
 To live in all that He hath bade to live :
 Thus living, find in love eternal life.
 Strong in thy faith, undaunted, undismayed
 Give to the world the best thou hast to give ;
 And love where love is not ; find peace in strife.

IN BEAUTY'S BLOOM

As when the Moon, emerging from a cloud,
 Sheds on the dreary earth her gracious light,
 A smile comes o'er the frowning brow of Night,
 Who hastens to withdraw her sable shroud ;
 And then the lurking shadows' dark-robed crows,
 Pursued with glitt'ring shafts, is put to flight ;
 And robed in silvery raiment, soft and bright
 The humblest flower as a Queen seems proud ;
 So when thou comest to me in Beauty's bloom,
 And on thy face soft Pity's graces shine,
 Thou can'st dispel the heavy shades of gloom
 From my sad heart, which ceases then to pine ;
 And Hope and Joy their quenched beams relume
 And gild the universe with light divine.

WEALTH

Gaze on this earth, see Nature's boundless store ;
 God gives it all to thee !
 Gaze on the heavens, and let thy spirit soar
 Into Infinity !
 Such wealth is thine, O vainly longing heart
 's there aught more to gain ?
 Desire and hope and fear—let all depart,
 For all their strife is vain.

One priceless boon does man's free soul require :
 The god-like power to give
 The best it has of love, and love's desire
 In other souls to live.

What gifts are thine, by the Great Giver given,
 All those love bids thee share
 With all thy fellow-souls on earth, in heaven,
 That claim the Maker's care.

Who gives, shall have ; the soul's pure gifts are won
 Back in Eternity.
 Love's gift is life below ; beyond the Sun
 It shall abide with thee !

“ ’ TWIXT STAR AND STAR ”

Not here,—not here, where weak conventions mar
 Life's hopes and joys, Love's beauty, truth and grace,
 Must I come near thee, greet thee face to face.
 Pour in thine ear the songs and sighs that are
 My heart's best offerings. But in regions far,
 Where Love's ethereal pinions may embrace
 Beauty divine—in the clear interspace
 Of twilight silence betwixt star and star.

And in the smiles of cloudless skies serene,
 In Dawn's first blush and Sunset's ling'ring glow,
 And in the glamour of the Moon's chaste beams—
 My soul meets thine, and there thine image seen,
 More real than life, doth to lone heart show
 Such charms as live in Memory's haunting dreams !

(SELECTIONS FROM “ RUDEL OF BLAYE ”)

Dumb longings of the heart ! What may ye be ?
 Bright stars that o'er Life's dim horizon shine ?
 Rich gems that darkly slumber in the mine ?
 Of pearls serene in Life's tempestuous sea ?
 Whate'er ye be, ye are no fantasy
 That mocks with baffling hope sad hearts that pine.
 Ye come as heralds from that realm divine
 Whose light unseen pervades Life's sombre mystery.

Immortal Beauty ! Be thou still the theme
 Of the heart's worship and its fervent song.
 Still let the soul, by Faith and Love made strong,
 See in God's works, though as a transient gleam,
 The mystic light that veils thy form supreme !
 Still let thy fleeting images that throng
 Before the mind their magic spell prolong
 Until man's life on earth becomes a heavenly dream !

* * * *

Thine are our visions of Eternity ;
 Thine too the songs that tremble on the tongue,
 As echoes of celestial songs, unsung.
 'Tis thine to stir the soul to ecstasy
 With wafted strains of far-heard minstrelsy
 From realms where Faith and Hope are ever young,
 Where dawning stars like blossoms newly sprung
 Find life's renewal in Love's hidden harmony.

* * * *

Ah ! beauty is a thing of earthly mould
 If but in form and feature it reside.
 Dust unto dust ; so ends the pomp and pride
 Of form and feature when the heart is cold.
 But when immortal spirit doth unfold
 Through mortal form His grace that will abide,
 Then beauty is of heavenly birth—a guide
 To realms eternal where Heaven's glories are unrolled.

* * * *

For beauty such as this my heart did pine,
 And now it comes to haunt my waking dreams.
 Hers is a soul illumined with the beams
 Of truth that comes to man by grace divine,
 Soul of her soul, these through her beauty shine—
 Veiled radiance from the Infinite ! Meseems
 Her beauty is the smile of God ! It gleams
 From yonder lands afar to light this heart of mine !

Valour and Faith, twin stars beyond the Pole,—
 These be the orbs on which our fate is writ,
 Unfading stars that from the Infinite
 With silent sway our destinies control !
 Are we not part of the eternal Whole ?
 What need to strain our eyes, to goad our wit
 To read the stars by which the skies are lit ?
 Read we the script of doom in our prophetic soul !

* * * *

Not mine the love that seeking soft delight
 Asks for a sensuous heaven to be blest.
 No caitiff's soul I harbour in my breast,
 That might attain with shame a belted knight.
 True as my trusty blade, as stainless bright
 As plumed helm that doth my brow invest,
 Is my proud soul whose honour these attest ;
 And such a stainless soul would with her soul unite.

* * * *

The Hand that traced in characters divine
 Upon Life's scroll the mystery of Doom,
 Shot light through Chaos and primeval gloom
 And bade its beams o'er rolling words to shine—
 That Hand doth lead him to the hallowed shrine
 Where Beauty reigneth in eternal bloom.
 Lo ! even now upon Fate's mystic loom
 The sombre shades of Death with Love's bright beams
 entwine !

* * * *

In Death we waken to Reality,
 And Error's myriad phantoms fly before
 Truth which the veil of thought can hide no more.
 Desires and passions too like shadows flee ;
 Time, space and circumstance all cease to be.
 Life's dreams thus past, and all its travails o'er,
 The pure-eyed soul regains the destined shore
 And stands, O Power benign, before Love's throne and Thee

PLATO

He lived with beauty mirrored in his soul.
 It was the beauty and the majesty
 Of this fair earth, the vast and solemn sea,
 Or of the skies where starry myriads roll.
 He looked beyond, and in the infinite whole
 He saw the Master's mind, the mystery
 Of Love and Beauty, Truth and Harmony
 Pervading Life. In him did faith control
 Misdoubting faith, and reason, reason's pride :
 Till all the bitter strife of hope and fear
 Was calmed, and thoughts that harass the weak mind.
 His spirit pierced the many veils that hide
 The Eternal, and he saw with vision clear
 The final good ordained for humankind.

GOLCONDA AT SUNSET

A shadow of the wings of Night
 Creeps westward o'er the horizon's bar
 Where through the greying mist of light
 Now faintly gleams the evening star.

There brooding Fame its vigil keeps
 O'er grim Golconda's castled height ;
 O'er domes in whose dark silence sleeps
 The glory of its men of might ;

O'er scenes where with expiring breath
 Faith hallowed the unnatural strife,
 And wrested from the hands of Death
 Its guerdon of immortal life.

The setting sun before he sets
 Long lingering casts his flickering ray
 On towers and mosques and minarets
 Robed in Time's holy garb of grey.

Bereft of power though not of fame,
 Custodians of the Past, they stand
 In mournful grandeur yet to claim
 Dominion o'er the subject land.

Yon fortress rears its dragon head
 To triumph o'er its foes—in vain ;
 In vain its ceils of ramparts breast
 The circling hills and swelling plain.

Ah ! what avails the embrasured tower,
 Or what the bastion-girded wall
 When God annuls a monarch's power,
 And Fate ordains a kingdom's fall ?

Ah ! vain his warriors steel-fenced ring ;
 In vain their swords and bucklers shine ;
 He falls, Golconda's fated king,
 The last, the gentlest of his line !

Not his the heart, not his the hand
 From death a hero's meed to gain ;
 An exile from his native land
 He drags unseen a captive's chain.

The years roll on—his hapless lot
 Let not the pensive Muse bemoan.
 He sleeps, by all save Heaven forgot,
 He sleeps in alien earth unknown.

But lo ! the years that roll away
 Bring vengeance on the wings of Time ;
 The victor lives to rue the day
 That made his victory a crime.

He lives to learn that Fate decreed
 In conquered kingdoms' doom his own,
 No vassal monarch at his need
 Comes to support his tottering throne.

The Southern kingdoms are no more,
 Whose loyal valour yet might save.
 Treason behind, and foes before,
 He sighs for peace—and for the grave.

Life darkens, power and glory fade—
 But will not Heaven the doom defer ?
 The hour hath struck ; the grave is made
 That marks an Empire's sepulchre !

DEATH OF NAPOLEON

(Written on the birthday anniversary of Napoleon)

Chained to his rock the dying hero lies,
 A martyr's bliss and agony in his heart,
 All darkness till the spirit's lightnings dart
 A radiance through the mist. Before his eyes
 The conqueror's triumphs fade, and glory flies.
 Peace crowns the crownless brow whose inmost part
 Throbs with expiring might. New visions start,
 Of new, peace-guarded-worlds 'neath calmer skies !

Around, the bleak crags moan, as moans the wind
 Shot through by forked flames ; the thunder roars.
 Earth shudders as though conquering legions trod
 Her bruised breast again. Then, unconfined,
 Above the tempest's flight his spirit soars,
 And the Earth-shaker stands before his God !

GAZAL BY NIZAM VII OF HYDERABAD

(Freely rendered in English Verse by Nizam Jung)

I'm in life a living legend
 Of some sad heart's secret pain :
 I'm of yearning hearts the minstrel—
 Of such hearts as yearn in vain !

Final stage in Life's long journey,
 Whence the destined goal appears,
 I'm the sole remaining relic
 Of the Caravan of years !

All our being's deepest secrets
 In my silence stand confest :
 Tho' I'm tongueless yet my meaning
 Is by magic power exprest !

I'm a symbol to the living
 Of that which shall be no more :
 Frail memorial, if Heav'n spare me,
 Of those that have gone before !

In my life I am the measure
 Of the truth affection lends ;
 I'm on earth a test and trial
 Of the vaunted faith of friends !

I'm the melody of Sorrow
 In the heart of Silence born ;
 I'm the dirge's mournful wailing
 O'er some wretch's grave forlorn !

When from Life I've vanished nameless,
 Thus the simple tale relate :
Osman proved the spite of fortune
 And the tyranny of fate !

HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA

HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA

Harindranath Chattopadhyaya has been described by a London critic to be a poet of such excellent promise as to be safely considered as a possible successor to Rabindranath Tagore. This is high praise indeed to come from a British critic, but I have to point out the fact that Harindranath has not to wait for his laurels, but already has them, and no one with any powers of critical appreciation of English poetry can venture to deny the fact that his promises are already performances and by the splendour of these performances he already stands very close to Rabindranath, flying under his wings in some respects and in others soaring clean over them. What any critic of real worth and insight ought to say is that Harindranath's performances, and the promises through these performances, are of such supreme excellence that we have to recognize in him not merely a poet who will rise to a higher level of poesy than attained by that veteran but also one who will give to our country a measure of fame and glory far in excess of that given by his great compatriot. These are our expectations of him, and we cannot but hope fervently that he will endeavour to fulfil our expectations as his mind matures, his experience deepens and the horizon of life broadens.

The charms of acting are now exercising a powerful influence on Harindranath. He must realize that the fascinations of Vaudeville and Hollywood are evanescent, but that the spires of Castalian heights kiss the very stars of heaven. Should he desert the Muse of poetry, he will not only inflict a calamity on himself but a calamity on English literature, especially poetry, in India.

In appreciation of Western poetry this country must produce a son who can weave a garland of poesy such as even the Muses of Thessalian vales would be proud and happy to wear. Our greatest thankoffering to England must be our contributions to the goodly realms of philosophy and literature. If we bow to England now, England will bow to us then. The best of all conquests is conquest by thought.

Harindranath Chattopadhyaya is the youngest son of the late Dr. Aghornath Chattopadhyaya who was famous in his day for his culture and catholicity of tastes and no less so for his eccentricities. With his father to teach him English, his mother to teach him Bengali and his sisters, Sarojini Naidu and Miss M. Chattopadhyaya, to inspire him, the lad became a lover of books, a lover of painting, a lover of poetry and a lover of music—a lover of all the beautiful things of life. The dawn and dusk, the streams and stars of midnight, spoke to him and Nature took him into her bosom and nursed him at her breasts. A result was that scholastic studies, as conveyed by uninteresting text-books and imparted by uninspiring teachers, did not appeal to him. He became a dreamer and a visionary. As a youth he was as great a wanderer in the wild places of the country as any seeker after Truth in accordance with the immemorial practice of the country. The dreams he dreamed and the visions he saw in his wanderings are reflected in his poems. These contain many airy fairy fantasies as well as some profound insight into Nature. Such a man as he is well called upon by Nature, who took him to herself, to interpret her many moods and through the medium of his poetry reveal the Deity at whose feet Nature dwells—all creation dwells,—and all Life dwells.

If he was a wild wanderer, he was not, however, wild in his ways. He was a vagrant of Nature; not a vagabond of civilization. His favourite places of visit during his strange roamings were shrines of outstanding fame and the sun-baked platforms of great devotees. But, here again, he was not himself a devotee in the strict sense of the word. He was not an ascetic, wedded to any particular creed or swayed by any special deity. Nor did he deify Nature. He was a child of God and roamed to his heart's content in God's cleanest home on earth—the valleys and mountain slopes, the banks of streams and shores of oceans.

If he roamed much in the wilds of nature he roamed also much about the beaten tracks of man in the towns and cities of the country. God's civilization in the green-canopied valleys and forests, and man's civilization in the dust-canopied cities—each had its lessons, its peculiar stimulus and inspiration. Looking on at the tragedy and serio-comedy of humanity he pondered over the unseen fundamental causes and was ready to forgive most where he found misery most; for he felt that being himself far from the infinite he could act as no judge of his fellow-men and pass severe verdicts on their actions. And he forgives—and hopes with a very fulness of hope. He seems to feel like Tennyson who sang :

I somehow trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

And, then again :

And one far off divine event
To which the whole creation moves.

On the death of a bird, Harindranath sings :

God's ways are infinite No power dare come
Between His perfect purpose and its goal ;
For He, the age-long Lover of the Soul,
Subjects all forms to endless martyrdom.

No one who is a severe critic and censor of his fellow-men's conduct can give expression to such sentiments. Death is not the conclusion of things nor annihilation the end of life. God's ways are infinite ; no power dare come between His perfect purpose and its goal. What could His perfect purpose be but to change in His own good time the dreary Winter of humanity into the refreshing Spring of divine contentment and happiness ?

He felt that his duty was to do good and not to act as a judge of others. What a lesson is this for all of us ! He sings in his poem " The Holy Shadow " thus :

Out of the depths of his soul's solitude
The calm saint said : " God grant I may do good,
Without my knowledge, to all things. This boon
Is all I beg of Him."

Behind the moon
God sat and heard and granted, and a flight
Of angels wheeled and fled beyond the night.

And so, it came to pass. Where'er the saint
Walked, there was Joy ; his shadow touched the taint
Of sin to purity, refreshed the soul
In fallen women, and made lepers whole.
And painted the pale cheeks of the weak child,
And kissed the barren meadows till they smiled.

His days in the midst of Nature and his many wanderings and sufferings and, above all, his wonderful ideas of

God and his firm faith in the purposes of God, his heart-ache at other's misery and his own longing to see the light behind all these folds of painful darkness, made him often yearn for pain, so that at least through it he may realize higher things—to find—

A holy Mecca in the heart of Pain.

In dealing with this subject of pain our poet works out a philosophy which very few poets have so far expounded. He virtually loves pain if through pain, as he feels, the depths of Eternity could be sounded. He sings :

Most splendid traveller of eternity
In whose first footfall all the world began,
A holy Mecca in the heart of me
Awaits your caravan.

With the caravan of Pain many have gone before to the abode of Peace and what wonder if this loved poet of ours yearns for Pain to make a holy Mecca in his heart before the Caravan starts to that bourne of bliss from which, happily, no traveller returns.

To Harindranath, man's highest duty is not only to pray for the privilege to do good to all things, even without conscious knowledge of doing good, but also to aspire to attain to the highest, the noblest and the best within him.

I cannot be encompassed by this span
Of blind still clay that binds my liberty :
I will exceed the meaning of a man
And be the being I was meant to be.

This is a very fine stanza with the meaning and teaching of ages. The lines sound audacious, preaching

a doctrine of self-sufficiency. In reality, however, they emphasise the supreme importance of endeavour. Every endeavour to do good, every endeavour to aspire to a higher level of life is an attempt at prayer to God to take us nearer, ever nearer, to His throne. As Browning says :

Break bounds, I say
Success is naught—Endeavour is all.

Setting aside the philosophy of his poetry and to consider his poetry by itself as poetry (a very arbitrary divorcement, no doubt, but the reason will soon be apparent) one has no hesitation in saying that his poetry is poetry of a very high class and his best is worthy to rank with the best of any modern poet.

His vocabulary is quite out of the ordinary and rich, but in certain respects he makes it to be of a stereotyped kind. Many words coming with too great a frequency fatigue one's appreciation and diminish one's relish of them. Words such as "gold," "red moons," "silence," "shadows" and a score of others, by their very frequent appearance in his pieces become too tame and cease to have their appeal, their fascination and their weight in the context. Beauty is ever lost by monotony. And his poetry, despite the rich variety of thought, is rather monotonous and wearisome on account of the sameness of the expressions. The charm of the sun-dawn and the soft appeals of the sun-set and the scores of attractions on the wonderful canvas of Nature have made him use a group of adjectives and hyphenated epithets inspired by these phenomena on almost all and sundry occasions. I cannot imagine Wordsworth falling into the snare of such wearisome sameness. The danger arises of superficiality, excessive sentimentality and also of soft nothingness.

To read some of his pieces is a pleasure but it is a painful pleasure to read all his pieces at one sitting. We are choked and stifled by his sameness of words. And the pity of it is that he is not a man who is stricken by any poverty of vocabulary. He is only word-bound and from this imprisonment he must free himself. This may not be considered a very serious defect, but one for whom the Muses, at the command of Destiny, hold out a crown of gold ought not to allow his undoubtedly rich thoughts to be dimmed of their richness by undue sameness of setting.

Different thoughts require different settings. Harindranath knows the sources of the springs of poesy, but he has yet to become a craftsman. And craftsmanship is as much a requisite in the realm of poesy as inspiration and thought and diction.

There is no other serious criticism which can be reasonably or legitimately passed on his poems. They are rich with promise of great things: it is for the singer to sing out his soul so that posterity may cherish his songs. As consolation and also inspiration for the poet, I may point out the melancholy fact that his great country-man, Rabindranath Tagore, will soon begin to occupy but the second shelf on account of the very same defect of constructional monotony. I may be told that the great Milton has but one solitary style in his imperishable "Paradise Lost." The style appears the same throughout on account of its majesty and sublimity. The criticism about want of craftsmanship, sameness of expression and constructional monotony cannot be applied to him because his sentences are not stricken with the disease of sameness. They are polished, chiselled and yet flowing and fluent, varied and variegated. Art has been concealed by art.

The accusation of faulty craftsmanship and a redundancy of merely mellifluous words in every stanza and in every piece is not severely applicable to many of Harindranath's sonnets which rise to a very high order of merit indeed—splendid for thought and splendid for diction. Here is one which compels appreciation :

Through years of seeking I have learned this much
That God, to test the truth of our desire,
Takes us deliberately through paths of fire ;
All grief is but the sweetness of His touch
Who hungers for our friendship night and day,
Reminding us in sorrow that He lives.
Ah Love, the many gifts He takes away
Are poor beside the many gifts He gives.

Has God's white lightning struck the little flower
Which you so loved and cherished and adored ?
Then take it as a herald to the shower
Which in His gentlest mercy will be poured
To speed for you, perchance, the blossoming hour
This time, of the large blossom of the Lord.

In this exquisite sonnet, the poet speaks with remarkable and truly refreshing devotion to God explaining the mystery of pain and of sorrow, those "paths of fire." And what a sentence is this !—"All grief is but the sweetness of His touch." If God "reminds us in our sorrow," that in our sorrow He lives, what consolation should not the thought give to everyone of us regardless of our creeds ? The same thought about the great God leading us through paths of pain to the land so wonderfully described as "the large blossom of the Lord," is to be found enshrined in quite a different manner in his piece entitled "Destiny." Destiny, to Harindranath, is not the blind urgency of a blind Fate ; it is not the cruel projection of us from Nothingness to Nothingness with but an awful, though short, interval of grief and grey skies ;

but the intelligent, purposeful guidance of an Intelligent, Merciful, Loving Being. Pain and grief, "the wisdom-haunted mysteries of God" lead us "through loud, long alleys to the silent goal"—the goal which is all triumphant, joyful, effulgent. Here is the piece :

Between the shadow and the light we tread
Innumerable ways. The dim control
Of perfect guidance sways us. We are led
Through loud long alleys to the silent goal.

Our blind unconscious feet are ever shod
With shadowy plumes flecked here and there with gleams ;
The wisdom-haunted mystery of God
Glowes like a lamp amid our shattered dreams.

Between the shadow and the light we go
Creatures of sleep, forgetfulness and sorrow,
Our footsteps beating to the solemn, slow
Music of yesterday, to-day, to-morrow.

Here is yet another sonnet which arrests attention for the exquisiteness of thought contained in it and its excellent diction :

We lose Thy voice since ours we use too much
Yielding but little time for silent grace.
In the sad maze of touch we lose Thy Touch
And, drunk with pride, we hardly know Thy face.
We lose Thy beauty blinded by our tears
And with our angry shadows haunt Thy way.
Through a long lonesome labyrinth of years
We strive to lead eternal Love astray.

O teach us, Lord, to keep the inward hush,
The subtle silence which is but Thy speech
O teach our body in deep shame to blush
At its revolts against Thy mercies Teach
These eyes to gaze upon the splendid rush
Of starry ecstasies within our reach.

It will be difficult indeed to find in the realm of modern poesy many pieces so great as the sonnet given below. What a sublime idea it is to say that throughout all our moments we are forgiven by all things all around us? Let the poet himself speak :

Each moment things forgive you. All your hours
 Are crowded with rich penitence unknown
 Even to you. Shot birds and trampled flowers
 And worms that you have murdered with a stone
 In idle sport . . . yea, and the well whose deep
 Translucent green and solitary sleep
 You stirred into harsh wrinkles with a stick.
 Red mud that you have bound into a brick,
 Old wood that you have wrought into a barque,
 Flame in the street lamp held to light the dark
 And fierce red rubies chiselled for a ring . . .
 You are forgiven each hour by everything
 Around you for transgression . . . Kneel, poor clod !
 And render thanks in burning tears to God.

If we are forgiven each hour by everything around us, wherefore should we not forgive, so that forgiving we may also be forgiven ?

Contrast the preceding two sonnets with this piece :

Green fields that meet yon azure languorous sky,
 The golden grain spread in the cottage-yard,
 Smoke-haze of village hearths, the cricket's cry,
 The silence of the midnight many-starred,

Tall trees that stand against the lemon light
 Of a new dawn, the chirping birds, the strange
 Freshness in things, the fragrance and the flight
 And life's unchanging ecstasy in change.

Winds playing endless music in the trees,
 The dim waves dancing in the dappled sea,
 The poet's hunger ever burning, these
 Are proofs of mortal immortality.

Take again the poet's piece on "The Vanquished Atheist."

The brooding light upon the mountain-peak,
Vast peacock clouds which dance in the still eve,
Red moonbeams, yonder bird with yellow beak,
And silver seas that heave,
Spring's laughter and the golden Autumn-mist,
The wistfulness of daylight taking leave :
These wage long war with the lone atheist.

O what a gentle enemy is God
Who stabs us with the dagger of a star,
Wounds us with flowers that His sure weapons are,
And brands us with the sunset's flaming rod,
Who conquers us with kind persuasive greys
And plaintive golds of twilight, overpowers
Our hearts with beauty, shoots His arrowy showers
From the bent rainbow till the blind soul prays.

Though thoughts are exquisite in all these yet there is a same coinage of words which wearies one. Hence, I maintain that read by random selection Harindranath is splendid and pleases and exalts, while read continuously he clogs one's taste. All is voluptuousness in expression and mintage of words of merely one small class, often lacking vibrant vigour, steely force and permanent appeal. Without changes and alterations in diction poetry, even though imbued with the highest thought, lends itself to the biting charge of effeminacy.

In some pieces, considering his thoughts and ideas in other pieces, the poet is extremely obscure in regard to his theology.

God is as much a prisoner, dear friend, as you or I,
His potency is limited and narrow is His being.
And whilst we struggle on the earth He weepeth in the sky,
Held in innumerable bonds, for an eternal freeing.

God is a mighty captive in the sky's enamelled tower,
 Vast ages greyly wander and in pity pass 'Him by.
 He dare not even save the fragile murder of a flower
 Nor hush the arrow-wounded bird's heart-agonising cry.

The thought in these stanzas is very clearly and very forcibly expressed. The idea that the Eternal Being could be limited in potency and is narrow in His being and is held in innumerable bonds will shock everyone of us. The Eternal and Infinite cannot be finite and time-bound, as it were, by human actions. The poet's idea which stands in danger of being charged with a very repugnant form of philosophic arrogance, requires interpretation and my interpretation is this: The finite events of this earth have their "effect" even upon the Great Being who is considered to be *passionless*. God is not unfeeling, If He is unfeeling he cannot be Love. The poet merely wonders at the mystery behind (the mystery of) Creation. It is a cherishable admonition to us, a heartfelt appeal to us, not to capture and crucify God every moment with our evil acts and unjust actions. See, how sublimely noble are his thoughts on God in the sonnet already quoted.

His highest philosophy, so far, would lead him to think that realization and attainment are reached when one's soul so develops itself as to see itself and find itself identified with all things at all times and everywhere. As God, as is believed by mystics, is in everything everywhere, so the poet thinks the summit of his realization would be when he sees himself in everything. To me this appears nothing more than an excess of ecstasy of feeling in the enthusiasms of the poetic mood when it suddenly breaks in upon moments of cool philosophic thought. We may differ from his opinions

but cannot condemn it on account of a difference of opinion. He has liberty to say what he pleases : while, on our part, we may point out to him that it is difficult for us to soar to the starry heights of his sublimity or come down to the melancholy depths of ditch-water or the slimy splendours of monsoon mud. See, in this connection, the poet on "Eternal Beauty" where he sees Eternal Beauty in colourlessness—or Whiteness. Here, the poet does indeed soar high. The idea of realization, however, does not come in very well here in his rapturous lines on "Eternal Beauty." On the one hand his highest attainment would be for his soul to see itself identified with all things, and, on the other, to see the Light of Lights, the Beautiful Unseen, the White Serenity, of which the colours of Life standing between screen the vision.

Alas why does this blue and gold and green
Of things step in between
Thee and my sight, O Beautiful Unseen.

The blue and gold and green of things are produced by the "darkness of his heart," by the twilight veils of "death and birth." Sin, in a word, breaks the white light of Heaven into multi-coloured hues and shuts out the great White Vision. This is a very fine piece and deserves deep appreciation. It requires, however, calm reading—else the thought will be lost.

Now, I will turn to what I may call his stray, small, pearly pieces scattered here and there in his books. Many of them are excellent. An idea is captured and set to the music of his words. And of these pieces some deserve a place in every anthology meant for use in our classrooms. They are rich in beauty of thought and beauty

of expression. Here is one such headed "Mystery" :

God made a flower through centuries of plan
And ages of long labour
And broke it goldly through the earth for man,
His very ancient neighbour.

Through centuries of pain He shaped a flower
With so much wonder in it
And with it He gave man the mournful power
Of murdering that flower within a minute.

Yet another in the same category :

Once in a sudden angry mood
I kicked a dog and spoilt its play
It sulked and went without its food
The whole of that unhappy day.

Then when the evening's eyes were red
With shedding tears of burning gold
The dog came to my door and said,
" Master, the truth had best be told :

Your piteous lack of self-respect
Which dared my self-respect to crush
Has the rich manhood in you wrecked
And made the great Creator blush."

How splendid is this young poet of nature in his feeling for the children of Nature. Listen again :

A bird was sitting on a tree
I shot it and it dropped and died
It made no difference to me
But in the heavens Some One cried.

In idle sport all carelessly
Upon a helpless worm I trod ;
It made no difference to me
But O the difference to God.

These lines remind one of Wordsworth's concluding lines in his justly famous Lucy poem.

Then, this short piece must bring a sacred hush to the heart of everyone :

Many were the games we played
In the body's house of clay :
We have weary grown at last
Of the shallow play.

Shadows of forgetfulness
Through the doors begin to creep.
Comrade, we are tired and now
It is time to sleep.

Many indeed are the games we have played in this our tenement of clay and having grown weary at last it is time for us to retire, for we are heavy with the sleep of Death, or, infinitely better still, we are heavy with the consciousness of the guilt of them all.

Let us turn to yet another of these gems from a strange country :

O who are you ? An infant asked
The leaping flames whose red caress
Caught his dead mother and unmasked
Life in its lonely nakedness :

Then came an answer from the fire
Sudden and sharp across the gloom,
" I am the terrible desire
Which shaped you in the mother's womb."

In the following, the rural in his heart speaks against the contrivances of modern civilization. The dust hums out the holiest music of its heart under the crude wheels

of a country cart, because it is driven by God's first labourer on the earth, his first and still the greatest :

Dust hummed the holiest music of its heart
Under the crude wheels of a country cart.

Beneath the bright wheels of a motor car
Dust groaned a groan which echoed wide and far.

His view of modern civilization which he does not, of course, altogether condemn, is glimpsed in the lines given above. It is a national poetic revolt against the kingdom of the steam-hammer and the steel-crane. Speaking more plainly and directly of the materialistic tendencies of this age of ours, he cries out :

Old earth is sick at heart . . . All is not well !
Huge monstrous shapes of iron, fire and lead
Now pace the wide world with their heavy tread.
Hark, the loud gruesome clanging of the bell
Of giant vendors on Life's way who sell
The artist's dreams, the holy virgin's head,
And the sweet soul of babes for bitter bread
To feed their hunger in the depths of Hell.

Bound to the wheel of doubt our hearts whirled,
Whirled round and round without a moment's pause.
Into a grey oblivion we have hurled
In atheist-conceit the primal Cause,
But soon a voice shall ring throughout the world
And re-establish God's eternal laws.

There is profundity of thought in "Paper Boats". God sends forth the barque of life, in the case of every human individual, embarked on the stormy sea of existence to see how it will behave itself : whether it would allow its steering wheel to be amenable in the invisible

hands of the Great Mariner or refuse to work and allow itself to be tossed about and finally wrecked.

On a dim stream I set afloat
A paper boat long, long ago
And said, " My little paper boat
We'll see how far you go ! "

On a lone stream long, long ago
God set me joyously afloat
And said, " We'll see how far you go
My little paper boat ! "

As for his plays, I feel I cannot write much here as the space at my command does not permit me to reproduce any one of them. They are all of them imbued with thought and often take high flights. They deserve not only to be read but also studied. Here, I must take the opportunity to say that Harindranath is not only a playwright but also an actor of great accomplishments. Such plays as " Raidas," " Tukaram," " Saku Bai," " Pundalik " are every one of them plays with the religious note strongly running through them. To a certain class of audience both here in this country and English speaking countries abroad, they will have a very strong appeal and will be greatly appreciated more in the reading than in the acting.

It is pleasant to record here that five of his plays have been recently published in book-form under the title of " Five Plays " with an introduction by Mr. Fowler Wright who on a former occasion wrote of him in regard to his poetry : " It may be high praise and yet not too high to say that what Joseph Conrad did for English prose, Chattopadhyaya is doing for English Poetry."

Here are two stanzas from "Tukaram" which show how he can let his thoughts rise to great heights when dealing with religious feeling for God. There are several such pieces to be found in the plays and every true lover of God, be he Hindu or any other, cannot but be deeply moved by them and, in fact, elevated, though interpretations of God's relations with mankind might differ.

We owe no man the shadow of a debt,
 But there is One to whom at every turn
 We owe a mighty debt, for has He not
 Given us eyes to drink the light of dawn,
 And lips to utter limpid words of love ?
 Has He not given us a glimmering soul
 To help the beauty of the universe ?
 Has He not coloured us with mystery,
 Has He not made the green grass and soft lights
 To paint a summer dawn for our delight,
 And where shall we find wealth enough to pay
 For one blue gleam, for one green blade of grass.

Where can we hide from Him who is Himself
 Hidden in every atom of the world ;
 O Love, all things between the earth and sky
 Are His eternal honest messengers :
 The squirrel on the bough, the silent lake,
 The heron standing on the water-line,
 The violet shadow hanging on a hill,
 The hawk which hovers over the tree-tops,
 And trees which beckon, beckon to the clouds
 And clouds which never break their vow of silence.

This host of old innumerable things
 On earth, in heaven, are His messengers
 Which would betray your steps at every turn,
 And if they slipped by chance into a sleep
 In sudden weariness, your very shadow
 Which follows, follows you and finds you out

To the dim utmost ends of earth, will bear
 Witness against you at the throne of God.

I hardly feel I shall be justified in lengthening this introductory note any further. I have meant it to be suggestive not exhaustive. Analytical criticism of the anatomical order might in some exceptional cases be permitted, but as a general rule it should be severely condemned. The reason is that analytical criticism which has not synthetic appreciation as its aim might carve out the body into all its component parts but by that very process destroy the soul. A critic's main duty, therefore, is just to give a rough but true sketch of the new land to be explored and leave his readers to do the exploring themselves.

To conclude, therefore, I would like to take the liberty to say that Harindranath is one of the world's leading poets and if his name is not as well and as widely known as those of some very much inferior to him in more than one respect, it is because he has never at any time taken himself seriously—and still does not—and consequently never took the trouble of giving the right sort of publicity to his poems. While he published his "Five Plays" in London, he published his collected "Poems and Plays" in Madras—he might as well have published it in Timbuctoo.

We are living in an age of publicity and advertisement and we are bound to take due note of the conditions which are surrounding us. No man cares to go knocking at the door of a new author—the new author must go knocking at the doors of his readers. When reputation is once established the process is reversed. The readers become the pilgrims and the author the priest of the shrine.

If Harindranath had been known as he should have been known, not merely one or two London critics but several scores of them would have gladly introduced him to the British reading public and created for him a vast appreciative audience not only in England but in the colonies and America as well. They would have not only found admirers for him but have found for him a place among the poets of to-day. Mr. Methuen in his "Anthology of English Verse" omits Harindranath altogether. Even Rabindranath Tagore is omitted—Tagore, a Nobel prize winner, and a poet on whom Mr. W. B. Yeats goes into raptures. Thomas Maynard in his "Our Best Poets," has not a word to say of our Indian writers of English verse.

As British critics have not had the fullest opportunity to do Harindranath proper justice, it is incumbent on his countrymen to render him the justice he has not received and I, for my part, have not the slightest hesitation in saying that if he is not superior to Chesterton or Yeats or any one else, he is as good as any other.

As a lyrist, he is far superior to many Indo-Anglian poets and for his philosophy it takes precedence over that of every poet in India. Even Rabindranath, in spite of his deep spirituality, falls below him and no one has given us such visions of God, such visions of the dealings of God with man, such visions of God's beautiful things abundantly showered on this world, such visions of the truth of things, as Harindranath has.

Here and there he makes himself obscure, but instances of obscurity are very few and they need not be seriously considered until the poet succeeds in telling us what he exactly means with his new ideas about

“inwardness.” “colourlessness,” the “white hush” and “realization.” There are, however, very many instances where he is crystal clear, making himself understood at once in the lisping of the child and the language of the sage. Christian readers in particular cannot but feel deeply moved when they read his peculiar poetic commentaries on pain and sorrow. When we read him on such subjects we seem to feel the curtains covering the hidden mysteries of existence, life and hereafter, stirring and swaying aside and giving us glimpses of the supreme content that awaits us on the other side.

Among our modern Indian poets, for some reason or other, we do not find even one who attempts to go down into the depth of things. Nature and the phenomena of civilization, its dull, grey reflections on existence,—these interest and awe them more than the spirituality that reigns behind all things, itself invisible but visible through other things, provided the eye is there to see and the heart is there to conceive. Rabindranath and Harindranath stand in this respect supreme. They are the exponents of the spiritual within man, not of the materialistic outside of man; and as Aurobindo Ghose very truthfully says, Harindranath is unquestionably the supreme singer of the vision of God. It is the old heart of India singing to the accompaniment of a new harp. The tune, however, is old—mellowed by the wisdom of ages and sanctified by the sufferings and benedictions of sages and saints. If India stands for spirituality, then it is but fitting that her poet sons, her philosophers and thinkers, should ever strive to keep her spiritual and protect her from the corroding contact of materialism.

Poets who render such a service to their fellow-men are not merely singers but teachers and prophets whose

names are to be honoured and whose writings are to be cherished. Harindranath is in this respect a true and noble servant of humanity and in the nature and manner of his service no poet of to-day excels him. And if we desire excellence in a man, do we not delight the most to see that excellence in his actions? A poet is a man of action when he sets out to breathe a sanctifying spirit on the hearts of others, rouse them from their lethargy and bids them see through their mind's eye the Great Reality behind the unreal and so-called realities of life. Man's principal function, says Harindranath, is not to concentrate his attention on serving his own purpose but to subordinate himself so as the better serve the eternal purpose of God. If pain and sorrow brush the canvas of life with hideous dark colours, if life is one long night for some, if living is no better than death to many, he, says the poet, "*Who permits these things knows also when to efface them altogether.*" What higher teaching can we expect of a man however great he may be?

Harindranath has not completed his service to humanity but has merely begun it. It will be the fervent hope of many who take the view I have taken that he may be given such visions of life, such interpretations of life, such commentaries on life, that working under divine inspiration he may bring such as seek God nearer and ever nearer to Him and impart comfort and consolation to such on whose shoulders the hand of suffering lies heavy. No man can have a nobler and a more exalted ambition and blessed is he that realizes it.

SELECTIONS.

THE FOUNTAIN

In every heart a jewelled fire
 Of holy love unconscious glows,
 The earthly seed of man's desire
 Gives birth to an immortal rose.

Each human body makes or mars
 The inspiration of the skies.
 There is no colour in the stars
 That is not drawn from mortal eyes.

'Tis thus in human pride I sing
 Though none my music understand,
 "The faery palace of a king
 Is fashioned by a beggar's hand."

DESTINY

Between the shadow and the light we tread
 Innumerable ways. The dim control
 Of perfect guidance sways us. We are led
 Through loud long alleys to the silent goal.

Our blind unconscious feet are ever shod
 With shadowy plumes flecked here and there with gleams.
 The wisdom-haunted mystery of God
 Glows like a lamp amid our shattered dreams.

Between the shadow and the light we go
 Creatures of sleep, forgetfulness and sorrow,
 Our footsteps beating to the solemn, slow
 Music of yesterday, to-day, to-morrow.

HARMONY

After long years of songless woe,
 After an age of voiceless gloom,
 To-day I break in sudden glow
 Over life's dim deserted tomb.

Earth-blossoms chant their songs of bliss,
 And sky-birds make their scented flights . . .
 Through me the lips of shadows kiss
 The frail white lips of inner lights.
 The universe is born again,
 Life-music thrills in every clod . . .
 God fashioned in an hour of pain
 The poet to re-fashion God.

A VISION FLASH

I see not, yet I see,
 I am the earth, the sky,
 And I whom you call me
 Am something more than I.
 I burn with hidden strength,
 I flame with hues and songs,
 O love, until at length
 To me, to me belongs
 The kingdom of the spheres
 Through myriad ages whirled.
 I am the Seer of seers,
 The moulder of the world.

SONNET

When I have passed the road of life and gone
 Into the ultimate silence, do not grieve
 My love, for these, my little songs, will leave
 Their echo ; though the body's veils be drawn
 My soul's eternal love shall linger on
 And its resplendent run of colours weave
 Into the clouds that burn and seas that heave
 Enamelling with fire the dusk and dawn.
 Since he who lives on earth and loves and sings
 Immortal grows, for song and love are free
 They are the ancient and unfettered wings
 Of Him who hungers after liberty
 Seated behind the adamantine bars
 Of dawn and sunset and the midnight stars.

THE FOOL

I am the ancient fool of earth.
 When was I born, you ask ? My birth
 Dates back in time much farther than
 The birth-hour of the world's first man.
 In fact my birth dates back as far
 As the conception of a star,
 A blade, a bird, a cloud, a wind
 In the lone stillness of God's mind.
 Two silent dark enchanted pools
 Lie in these eyes you call a fool's.
 You catch dim glimpses in their deep
 Waters, of God's eternal sleep
 Whose dreams are time and death and birth
 And the swift beauty of the earth.
 Who made the desert and the sky,
 The silent hill, the eagle's cry,
 The twilight gold, the twinkling rain,
 The sky-blue lake, the silver crane,
 Who made red morning light and cool
 White moonbeams also made the fool.
 O should the fool but cease to be
 There would not grow a single tree
 On the wide earth, nor burn on high
 A single star in all the sky.
 The rainbow would forget its seven
 Colours and not seen to float
 Like an angel's bridal boat,
 And no bird again be seen
 Like a sudden mood of green
 Or the vision of a bright
 Yellowhood in gorgeous flight.
 Wise man, lo ! it is my birth
 Gives your wisdom any worth,
 For the shadow in my eyes
 Is the light of Paradise.

MOMENT OF SOUL

We stand each moment on the shadowy verge
 Of rich discovery. The crystal urge
 Of unseen beauty and eternal mind
 Forever beats like restless wings behind
 The blindness of our bodies and the bars
 Of little selfhoods that deny the stars
 Access to warm inviolate founts of fire
 Glittering past the perishable desire
 Which serves them as pale fruit on which to thrive...

Yet there are moments when the flesh alive
 As of a sudden to a white-flame beat
 Begins to break and blossom into sweet
 Celestial silences that clasp incurled
 The mad and wandering music of the world.

Attuned to every speck of earth and sky
 We stand and in our beings catch the cry
 Of growing grass, the delicate noise of wings,
 Among the leaves, the throb of little things
 And each a priceless portion of our own
 Large growth, which knowing we become alone
 Re-lit with the pure flame that Deep to Deep
 Scatters to separateness in our dim sleep
 Of pains and pleasures...

What are we alas !

But frozen shadows seen as in a glass
 Each moving to his cold self-built tomb ?
 Pale-passioned spectres passing in the gloom
 Awhile into mere deadness and decay !...
 But, in eternal mood, the common clay
 Which stifles the immaculate flame within
 All suddenly doth of itself begin
 To be transformed into a lamp divine

Meet for God's shadowless mysterious shrine
 Shedding the soul like perfumed radiance.
 'Tis then that visible beauty weaves its dance
 Stripped naked of its shadowy vesture till
 The fiery consciousness of stainless Will
 Consumes its form away : and then alone
 The soul to the vast silence makes her moan
 In which swift moment her sweet nakedness
 Wears midnight heaven like a starry dress
 And dawn-lit earth like a pale robe of flowers...

Only for a pure while her myriad powers
 Unfold like magic visionary light
 Awaking everywhere a sense of flight
 Towards the single goal that all things seek...
 The cloud, the mountain and the sunset streak,
 The coloured flowers, the crawling worms and we
 Companions on the road of destiny.

Would that we could such glimpses catch and gild
 Our lifetime with their rapid gleams and build
 A clean and holy temple-house of truth
 Once and forever here, that the world's youth
 Might worship in its silence age by age
 Until it grow into the perfect sage
 When He shall cease to hunger...

But alas !

Moments of soul like lightning-splendour flash and pass.

THE EARTHEN GOBLET

O silent goblet red from head to heel,
 How did you feel
 When you were being twirled
 Upon the Potter's wheel
 Before the Potter gave you to the world ?

"I felt a conscious impulse in my clay
 To break away
 From the great Potter's hand that burned so warm
 I felt a vast
 Feeling of sorrow to be cast
 Into my present form.

Before that fatal hour
 That saw me captive on the Potter's wheel
 And cast into this crimson goblet-sleep,
 I used to feel
 The fragrant friendship of a little flower
 Whose root was in my bosom buried deep.

The Potter has drawn out the living breath of me
 And given me a form which is the death of me.
 My past unshapely natural state was best
 With just one flower flaming through my breast."

MYSTERY

God made a flower through centuries of plan
 And ages of long labour
 And broke it goldly through the earth for man,
 His very ancient neighbour.

Through centuries of pain He shaped a flower
 With so much wonder in it
 And with it He gave man the mournful power
 Of murdering that flower within a minute.

AFTER SUNSET

A soft breath blows from the mouth of the south
 And a gold throb beats in the breast of the west
 And the soft grey shadows take birth on the earth
 And the young stars break to a cry in the sky.
 I hear the shrill croaking of frogs in the bogs
 While the heavens are wrapped in the shroud of a cloud,
 Lo, over the tree-tops the lightning is bright'ning
 And the moments are broken asunder with thunder.

There's not the least echo of feet in the street
 But the street-lamp stands with his light through the night,
 And the glow-worm scatters a park in the dark
 While the darkness voyages on to the dawn.

To-night in my heart there's a gleam of a dream
 That is written in rhymes on the pages of ages :
 The lips of an infant are pressed to the breast
 O, the mother who won him with tears through the years.

ETERNAL BEAUTY

O white Serenity, sweet Light of lights !
 Why do you stand alone, unknown, apart
 Behind the crowded hues of heaven and earth
 Veiled by the innumerable days and nights
 And by the twilight veils of death and birth
 And by the little darkness of my heart ?

O majesty of Whiteness : a bird's wing
 Which flashes idly on a day of Spring,
 An orchard-peacock's shadow, or the green
 Shimmer of a young grass-blade comes between
 Thee and my vision like a jealous veil.
 Alas, why do this blue and gold and green
 Of things step in between
 Thee and my sight, O beautiful Unseen ?

Nay, nothing veils the loveliness of Thee :
 Moment to moment, lo, Thou art revealed :

The circumambient skies

Bluely express Thy lone infinity,
 Thy bounteous nature glimmers in the field,
 Thy heart beats in the stars, thy laughter glows
 In the dawn's liquid laughter-break of rose,
 Thy words are formed into white clouds which sail,
 Thy silence finds its voice in the world's cries,
 All things in earth and heaven slowly yield
 Thy frank and open loveliness, O seen Unseen !

Naught other comes between
Thee and my vision like a burning veil
Than the strange fear of splendour in my eye !

THE DOG

Once in a sudden angry mood
I kicked a dog and spoilt its play
It sulked and went without its food
The whole of that unhappy day.
Then when the evening's eyes were red
With shedding tears of burning gold
The dog came to my door and said,
" Master, the truth had best be told :
Your piteous lack of self-respect
Which dared my self-respect to crush
Has the rich manhood in you wrecked
And made the great Creator blush."

PAIN

O pain, I love the lonely wine-red gleam
Within your deep and ever-wakeful eyes :
Old Arab in the lone tent of my dream
Under the burning skies.
Excess of ecstasy, immortal pain,
Comrade of love, companion of desire,
Lone Bedouin riding through life's desert plain
A camel of red fire.
Most splendid traveller of eternity
In whose first footfall all the world began,
A holy Mecca in the heart of me
Awaits your caravan.

PAPER BOATS

On a dim stream I set afloat
A paper boat long, long ago,
And said, " my little paper boat
We'll see how far you go ! "

On a lone stream long, long ago
 God set me joyously afloat
 And said, "we'll see how far you go,
 My little paper boat !"

SONNET

Old earth is sick at heart...all is not well !
 Hug monstrous shapes of iron, fire and lead
 Now pace the wide world with their heavy tread.
 Hark, the loud gruesome clanging of the bell
 Of giant vendors on Life's way who sell
 The artist's dreams, the holy virgin's head,
 And the sweet soul of babes for bitter bread
 To feed their hunger in the depths of Hell.

Bound to the wheel of doubt our hearts are whirled,
 Whirled round and round without a moment's pause
 Into a grey oblivion we have hurled
 In atheist-conceit the primal Cause,
 But soon a voice shall ring throughout the world,
 And re-establish God's eternal laws.

SONNET

Forgive me, Master, for the precious hours
 Of life light-squandered in impetuous pride ;
 For treading on the sacred garland-flowers
 You crowned my soul with, calling her your bride.
 Forgive me Youth's mad deliberate waste,
 Its shattered lamp, shed wine and broken flute,
 Its obstinate self-will that would not taste
 Your shining offerings of inward fruit.

Forgive, and draw me home...The daylight dies !
 I tire of ways which once I loved to roam.
 There is a weary burning in my eyes
 Which yearn for sleep and silence...Take me home
 Away from dust and penury and heat
 To rest in the soft shadows of your feet.

SKY AND BIRD

Through a tiny eye a bird
 Gazed at heaven without a word
 When suddenly a soft voice stirred
 The dawn and this is what I heard :
*“ Which is greater, the great big sky
 Or a small bird’s heaven-measuring eye ? ”*

CAMELS

From faery pitchers dusk outpours
 Her subtle grey and fills
 With melody of silences
 The camel-coloured hills.

Cloud-camels wander in the sky’s
 Dim deserts lone and bare
 A-tinkling stars like silver bells
 Amid the dusky air.

Through deepening dusk I sit and gaze
 Into my spirit’s glass
 Wherein my visions, one by one,
 Like shadowy camels pass.

BALANCE

Have you not learnt as yet
 Through sad unnumbered years
 The reason why your eyes are wet
 With tears ?
 Earth cries in pain

Of sweet innumerable unborn flowers
 And that is why the raincloud sheds its rain
 In showers.

It is the falling of a leaf
 Lone lily through the labouring dark of birth
 Which brings about the falling of a leaf
 To earth.

Through the deep night of years
 Some lone voice cries
 And that is why your eyes
 Are wet with tears.

REPENTANCE

Repentant evil changes into power
 Even as sorrow borne with patience changes
 To the white imagery of eternal peace.
 But penitence over an ugly past
 Which stands and broods upon the way, a dead
 Inactive penitence void of desire
 To carve the future into a lovely thing,
 Is ever more sinful in God's eyes than sin
 Left unrepented.

THE SONG OF KRISHNA

To-day I heard
 The black mud sing a blossom into birth
 As though it were all heaven's bridal word
 Shyly pronounced to earth.
 Out of the dark
 A firefly flowered and flashed and floated by,
 In the green splendour of its single spark
 I heard the star-deeps cry.

To-day I saw
 Myself, a thing of glory, shadow-shed,
 And saw the world, a gem without a flaw,
 Flash in the holy crown upon my head.

SONNET

Life like an arrow from some hunter's bow
 Glimmers awhile and passes out of sight.
 The music of our hearts before we know
 Grows tired and dies away into the night.
 Ere these our blind and earnest hands can light
 The body's earthen lamp, the sharp winds blow
 Each hopeful spark out, leaving us to go

In utter darkness through life's lonely fight.
 Life is a phantasy of fading gleams,
 A pale procession of pathetic tears
 Seeking in vain joy's long-imagined goal...
 Since the poor compass of its fleeting years
 Affords us but a little space for dreams
 And cramps the mighty vision of the soul.

THE JOURNEY OF TIME

A myriad ages gave To-day its birth
 And now To-day is taking leave of earth
 In grey tranquillity. To-day! you seem
 To come and go as swift as any dream

Or hope you bring for us. Farewell, To-day!
 In time's old chariot on your homeward way
 You go to meet within the shadowy deep
 Innumerable Yesterdays who keep
 Awake beyond the soul's unconscious sleep.

Time's chariot-wheels run swiftly in the dark.
 The great sky crackles spark by starry spark
 Throughout your journey, when, in a new dawn
 Stars die, we wake and know that you are gone.

O beautiful To-day, you will be cast
 With the pure dawns and sunsets of the past
 Into an ancient world where bygone years
 Are dancing to the fall of human tears.
 And all we blindly deem long-dead on earth
 Stands endlessly along the edge of birth
 Beckoning in love to unborn things that are
 Their deathless comrades answering from afar.

NAWAB DR. IMADUL MULK BAHADUR

DR. IMADUL MULK

The poet whose writings we are now to consider is, unhappily, no more in our midst. He has gone the way of all flesh and of him can be said, as he himself said when Sir Syed Ahmed Khan died :

God rest his soul ! His be the meed
Of those who strive to give their kind
Their lives' best work, and leave behind
Some pregnant germs of thought and deed.

In his days he was a giant among giants and after the death of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, he was the man who was the most looked up to by the Moslems of India. Himself no active politician, he nevertheless guided the political activities of his co-religionists. A man of deep culture, calm and unruffled temper, wise with the wisdom which comes of reverence for religion, inspired by high ideals of service, he was a man respected by men of all classes and creeds, and, in this province of ours, he was the most prominent personality of his day. His services in the cause of educational progress in Hyderabad can never be too highly estimated and to him and to him alone such of us who are in the prime of life to-day owe our deepest debt of gratitude. He was a man who, imbued with high moral principles, diffused them through his advice, his work, his conversation and his very personality.

To his scholarship in Arabic, Persian and English was superadded the gift of poesy and this for the reason, no doubt, that all great men and great workers are dreamers of dreams and conjurers of visions. It is the dream and the vision which lead them on, which spur them to action, which inspire them to great deeds.

Nawab Imadul Mulk Bahadur was a lover of poetry from his youth onward. His love for English poetry became in time so intense that he himself felt an inward

urge to express his own thoughts in rhythm and rhyme. And in this way he became the pioneer, in one sense, of Indo-Anglian poetry in Hyderabad. Before him no man ventured to write verses in English. As a matter of fact even tolerably high class prose was a rarity. It must not, however, be thought that Dr. Imadul Mulk wrote poetry with the definite purpose of setting an example to others and creating a desire in them to couple essays in poetry with essays in prose. He merely wrote for his own pleasure and at long intervals and I do not think he ever made any serious attempt to take himself as a poet and the few pieces which have come down to us must, therefore, be considered and treated as stray fruits of his passionate love for English poetry. And for this reason also, he stands (unlike Sir Nizam Jung who seriously takes himself to be a great poet) exempted of the charge of giving to us something which is but a poor index to his depth of culture.

Dr. Imadul Mulk had the instinct and urge of poetry in him, but as he did not seriously set himself down to writing poetry, he has given us pieces which, for lack of conscious, sustained effort, are of a type which preclude him from admission into the circle of poets as such. His pieces are poetry but this is in itself no justification for the presentation to him of insignia from Apollo. If every one that writes verses is a poet, then the real poets must find another name for themselves.

The Nawab, as I have said, loved English poetry so deeply that there was an inward urge in him at intervals to express his own thoughts in poetry. And this love of his led him on to imitation. His longest piece is an elegy (not in elegiac metre) written after the death of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and it is entitled "In Memoriam"

and closely follows Tennyson's "In Memoriam" in style, metre and method of treatment. Imitation in itself is not a crime, so long as it is not a failure but a success. The attribute of success, unfortunately, cannot be extended to the Nawab's "In Memoriam." It, however, contains some excellent stanzas : such, for example :

March is the year's great almoner,
And pours abroad with stintless hand
His largess over field and strand
And valley-glade and mountain spur.

Incidentally, I am afraid, the Nawab when he wrote this stanza was thinking of an English and not an Indian March. In Northern India, the wheat harvests are gathered in March and April—of this there is no doubt. But it is in March that the Indian autumn sets in and leaves fall and trees stand bare, and by no stretch of imagination can it be said that March pours

His largess over field and strand
And valley-glade and mountain spur.

The Nawab loved Nature and though he never attempts to see "sermons in stones and books in running brooks" and give us the fruits of his acquisition, he nevertheless has some very delicate references to Nature :

The koel with a tireless throat
Sends forth his call from copse and tree
To swell the season's minstrelsy ;
This is a very fine touch :
To swell the season's minstrelsy.

And his reference to a north Indian 'March' harvest is splendid indeed :

The golden grain is gathered in ;
The day is yellow with the gleam
Of russet straw, and on the stream
The harvest smell lies soft and clean.

And here is a triplet of which any poet can be proud :

Where roses climb half-way
To trellised jessamine,
Soothing the sultry day.

Just think of the soft and delicately beautiful idea of roses and jessamine, with whole buds and blossom and petal, with cool deep-green leaves and haunting fragrance soothing the day that has suffered from the rays of the noon-day Sun ! And to give an instance of another tender touch :

Do I love thee ? Ask not again :
The stars above thee answer, yes,
And the flowerful plain.

And a child-like touch is in :

Live no laughless day, my Love !
Live no loveless hours,
Weep no tears in shine, my Love !
Or showers.

It is a delight to me to think of the Grand Old Man going about his garden and thinking such tender thoughts. If he was not a great poet or even a poet in the first rank, he was nevertheless a man who thought like a poet. In moments of tender exaltation, his prose took wings. And written in this mood, this tender, softened exaltation is his best piece, "Love's Sadness."

There is in love a gentle sadness
Which lovers only know,
A sorrow much akin to gladness
In its supernal glow.

I am reminded on reading this of Shelley's lines :

We look befo re and after,
And pine for what is not :
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught ;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Shelley expresses a different idea but with that exquisite gentle touch which the Nawab has tried to attain. Another instance of this touch is in his verses on " Youth."

On lightning wings it came,
On lightning wings 'twas gone.
Youth is an empty name,
The blushes of a dawn.

One more instance of this gentleness of touch and memorability and I pass on to a consideration of another feature of the Nawab's poetry. Writing on " April in India " he sings :

The west wind moaned among the trees,
The sad leaves shook and fell,
The distant murmur of the bees
Came faintly down the dell.
Love lay among his wasted flowers ;
Love sighed and sang—" The day is long " ;
Time laughed and would not hear the song.

Here are the memorable lines:—

Love sighed and sang—" The day is long " ;
Time laughed and would not hear the song.

Turning now to manifestations of depth of thought in the Nawab's verses, I must say that these are few and far between and for this reason his poetry falls very far short of greatness. All the excellency lies in mere, fleeting, fugitive touches. In his " Butterfly and Moth "

he says in reference to the Moth which goes joyously to the flame of the candle and there allows himself to be consumed to death :

An unsung Idyll in his life,
The little fragile moth reveals,
The primal lay of mortal strife
To win the light that death conceals ;
And dying thus he leaves behind,
A burning message for his kind.

In very soft lines he tells us that

Not vainly was the human soul
Made kin to sorrow from its birth,
That so its elemental worth
Be chastened for a Heavenly goal.

And writing on Sir Syed Ahmed he says :

One gift alone is given us here—
To leave the heritage of our thought,
To leave the work our hands have wrought
As deathless heirlooms at the bier.

This is splendid indeed ; thought must be the highest heritage one must think posterity would like to have from one ; and the most precious of heirlooms, our life's work, which we cease from at the bier.

It is in his sonnets that the Nawab reveals some power of thought as well as power of expression ; and I, for one, consider his sonnet on " Woman " as one of the best written in India.

O woman ! thou art Fate
Without Fate's blindness. Not divine art thou,
Yet surely nearest God in form and state
Of all his works.

It is the sacred mother and the faithful, chaste wife
who is

Nearest God in form and state
Of all his works.

And writing on the past days of youth he says :

'Too late ! too late ! you reap as you have sown ;
You should have cared in Spring for Winter's needs.

Then again, he gives a powerful and moving picture
in " A child's first knowledge of Death " :

And in a well-known bed, a well-known face
Waked not but slept, and all the house was hushed.

And, listen :

From the crucible of pain
Our lives rise pure of dross. Melted in rain
Are now the threatening clouds of former days.

The Nawab was one who neither took himself to be
a man of letters nor a poet and hence we find among
his literary remains nothing but addresses, speeches and
memoranda, and some pieces of poetry, which we have
considered in detail.

There is no uniformity of excellence in his poetry
and the stanzas and lines containing real merit both from
the point of view of diction and depth of thought are very
few. Though by no means a poet in the sense in which
we should understand the meaning of the word he was
nevertheless one who had the poetic feeling strong within
him and we must remember him for such things as he passed
on to us and not submit his writings to the strict scrutiny
of modern criticism.

SELECTIONS

SELECTIONS FROM 'IN MEMORIAM'

One gift alone is given us here—
 To leave the heritage of our thought,
 To leave the work our hands have wrought
 As deathless heirlooms at the bier.

These will bear fruit of which the seed
 Self-sown in furrows new or old
 Will yield a harvest manifold
 Of good or ill in thought or deed.

And be a blessing or a curse
 To years and ages yet unborn,
 Thus passing on their love or scorn
 Before the entrance of their hearse.

* * *

With daring hand he touched the loom
 Of life that haply he might leave
 Some brighter threads for Fate to weave
 With sombre warp of human doom.

A glorious future for his race—
 The lengthened shadow of their past
 Transfigured on the landscape vast
 Of Western culture, Western grace.

A wise acceptance of *what is*
 Divorced from faineant discontent,
 And girdle girt for each event
 That in the future might arise.

And faithful service toward his Queen
 Rendered with free-born love and pride,
 Not with the show of those that hide
 Their mocking hate behind a screen.

* * *

Not vainly was the human soul
 Made kin to sorrow from its birth,
 That so its elemental worth
 Be chastened for the Heavenly goal.

Is not God's pity sweet to have
 And sweet to hold ! If this be so,
 Then too is sorrow sweet to know,
 Sweet for the spirit that is brave.

Out of the fire thy soul may rise
 God-helped to purer life ;
 And memory of a bygone strife
 Be held a portion and a prize.

God's cunning hand we cannot tell :
 He has a salve for broken hearts ;
 And though the wounded surface smarts
 In His own way He makes it well.

Peace, then my child ! Nay wipe thy tears :
 Listen to the Healer's voice aloft :
 He speaks in accents tender-soft :
 Listen, for he that hearkens hears.

FRAGMENT

Dear friend ! if we are spared a while
 To wander in this vale of tears,
 We'll meet again and mend the chain
 Though snapped in twain by sundering years.
 Once more the faded flower will smile,
 The sun will haply shine again.

* * *

A DREAM OF YOUTH

Methought I dreamt a dream,
 Delicious, sense-enthralling,
 That one, forsooth may deem
 Was come of Heaven's own calling.

The joys of life were there,
 Such joys as never pall,
 And all of earth of air
 Seemed beautiful withal.

The joy that beamed within me
Shone mirrored all about,
And my notes of ecstasy
Were echoed with a shout.

Each phase of smiling nature
To me was full of glee :
With every living creature
My heart had sympathy.

Each tiny little flower
In garden, sward or heath,
Aye ! every blade of clover
With naught but joy did breathe.

In every rustic maiden
I saw a thousand charms,
With homely virtues laden
Worthy my loving arms.

And nought of vice or failing
Peopled my vision world ;
No sorrow, no bewailing
Was ever seen or heard.

And " always to be blessed "
Was not the lot of man,
For blessing I confessed
O'erflowed our mortal span.

In such a world methought
I lived and had my being,
Where faith was sold nor bought,
Where seeing was believing.

And then there came a waking
My happy dream was gone ;
The shadows of my making
All vanished one by one.

Alas ! it was no dream
 But stern reality,
 The type of what I deem
 Youth's ideality.

On lightning wings it came,
 On lightning wings 'twas gone.
 Youth is an empty name
 The blushes of a dawn.

THE CHILD'S FIRST KNOWLEDGE OF DEATH

The haunting records of a far-off clime,
 Conned through the mist of years bring back to me
 One dread dark night of sleepless memory,
 When all the spectral silence of the time,
 And strange house-noises of a ghastly chime,
 And huge waves swashing on a viewless lea,
 And high winds soughing in a feath'ry tree,
 To my awed ears intoned a most weird rhyme.

* * * * *

Day dawned at length without surcease of pain
 And dazed bewilderment. The child half saw,
 Half guessed mysterious rites with piteous awe ;
 But missed their dire portent ; he missed the chain
 That linked events ; scarce felt the primal stain
 Inevitable ; scarce perceived the law
 That must each life in swift progression draw,
 For dread fulfilment, down th' abysmal main.

That fateful day and many days thereafter,
 Were blurred to the child's eye with mist of tears
 Unshed, or she with ill-simulate laughter,
 Lest loving hearts should guess forbidden fears.
 The ache abode with knowledge half attained :
 It was despair when certitude was gained.

* * *

SONNETS

(i)

Of powers on earth, that make or mar man's life
 Is chiefest woman. Conscience, honour, truth,
 Ambition, love of peace or love of strife,
 Religion, chance that comes when life is smooth
 And turns its course awry, or fear of death,
 Are all most potent arms of destiny ;
 But woman crowns them all. From her a breath,

A tone or token, touch, or glance of eye
 O'ermasters all. O ! Woman ! thou art Fate
 Without Fate's blindness. Not divine art thou,
 Yet surely nearest God in form and state
 Of all His works. And when He carved thy brow,
 Sweet friend, and lit thine eyes with light of day
 He shed on thee his most divinest ray.

(ii)

I doubt if Heav'n has anything more fair,
 Nothing on earth is half as fair as she,
 Or sweet, or half so warm, or womanly,
 Not in Sicilian plains, or far Cashmere,
 Hyperian fields, or blue-viewed Nilgiri,
 Bloomed bud, or ripened fruit of richer hue
 Than on her sunny face and forehead free.
 No lethal weapons in her armoury
 She keeps, or barbed words of gall and rue ;
 But kindly wit, and eyes of heavenly blue
 For winged glances ; witching smiles for friends
 With many a nameless way of winning them.
 On her chaste bosom glistens not a gem,
 Her precious woman's heart makes rare amends.

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